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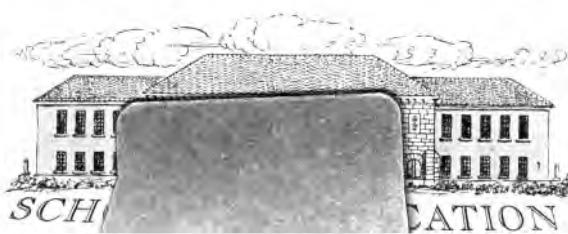
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THE MELODIC METHOD
IN SCHOOL MUSIC



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THE MELODIC METHOD IN SCHOOL MUSIC

A MANUAL FOR
TEACHERS AND SUPERVISORS

BY

DAVID C. TAYLOR
AUTHOR OF
"THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SINGING"

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

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PREFACE

MUSIC to-day ranks as one of the major subjects in the elementary school course. It is, indeed, the only subject taught consecutively throughout the entire course of eight years. The importance attached to school music is shown by the amount of time it receives. From 60 to 150 minutes a week are devoted to class instruction, the average for all grades throughout the country being about 100 minutes. Assembly singing generally occupies from 5 to 15 minutes a day, a total, on the average, of about one hour in the week. With the extra time spent in preparing songs for commencements and other exercises, and the marches usually played for assembling and dismissing schools, music is seen to receive the surprising total of two and one-half hours in the school week of 25 hours.¹

In order that the utmost possible benefit may be derived from the time thus expended, a comprehen-

¹ *Music in the Public Schools*, U. S. Bureau of Education, Bulletin, 1914, No. 33.

sive plan of class instruction is needed. Such a plan must be founded on an understanding of the exact educational purpose of music; it must accord with the psychological laws of the child's mental and spiritual growth; and it must present music always as an art, the most important indeed among all the arts of emotional expression.

The method of instruction here outlined is designed to take cognizance of these principles. In some respects it may be found to depart from the practices now followed in many schools, but when its pedagogical basis is understood, no radical change is needed for its adoption by any competent body of teachers. Any well-arranged set of music textbooks may be used in accordance with this method, such minor changes in manner of presentation being made as will at once suggest themselves to the alert supervisor or department head.

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THE MELODIC METHOD IN SCHOOL MUSIC

CHAPTER I

THE PURPOSE OF MUSIC IN GENERAL EDUCATION

The Peculiar Position of Music. Music occupies a peculiar position in general education. It is not a practical study, in the sense that practical utility is found in reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic. The child is taught to read in order that he may be able to read. He learns arithmetic because in all his later life the ability to deal with figures in some form is an absolute necessity. So also with writing and spelling; each of these studies is an end in itself. The great amount of time devoted to music cannot be justified on the same ground of practical utility. As far as the usefulness of the two is concerned there can be no parallel between the reading of books and the reading of music.

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Only a very small proportion of children will be regularly called on to read music or to sing at sight, after they have left school. The few who become members of choral societies and choirs no doubt will find great value in their knowledge of notes. Yet the school would not be justified in teaching all children to sing in concerted music, for the sake of providing the community with a small number of good choristers. The music taught in the schools is not an end in itself, but the means to an entirely different end.

Whatever the end to be attained through school music, it would seem to be of great importance to the whole scheme of education. There must exist some weighty reason for placing so much emphasis on a study of no direct practical value.

Its Newness as a School Subject. The adoption of music as a regular school subject has been very recent. Its present status was reached hardly more than fifteen years ago. Educators of an earlier generation would hardly have countenanced the outlay of a tenth of the school's time on a subject which then seemed of no importance whatever. There must have been some urgent necessity for the advance of music as an educational subject.

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Yet the necessity itself must have arisen very recently.

It is a truism of pedagogics that formal education reflects the whole life of a community. Naturally so, for its purpose is to fit each child to take his place in the community life. As the social environment changes, the system of education must also change, and shape itself according to the new conditions. To find the reason for music's present importance, we must see first of all what change in our social life has demanded this corresponding change in education.

Environment and Education. In fact our whole social environment has changed completely in the past twenty-five years. The present industrial civilization is entirely different from anything that the world has ever known before. We live in a new world. Formal education is called upon to prepare children for new conditions of life. Some aspects of the change that has taken place are indeed evident at the first glance. The reason for the introduction of courses in manual and vocational training, cookery, sewing, etc., is readily seen. But with music the reason is by no means so easy to assign. Since the study itself is unprac-

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tical, the need for it does not lie on the surface of things. Conditions of living have changed in many matters which are not directly practical. We must look beneath the surface of physical things, to find the reason why music is so vitally needed in education and to see how our spiritual and emotional life is affected by the changed conditions.

The Problem of Emotional Training. In preparing children for life in the world, earlier educational systems had to consider little more than the training of the mind. Everything else was provided for by agencies outside the school. Nowadays the school is expected to cover a much wider field, and its problems are vastly more complex. One problem in particular is new to this generation,— the training of the emotional nature. This is a peculiar demand, which has been imposed on us by the rise of industrialism. To fit the child for an orderly and well-conducted life, his emotional nature must now receive a systematic training. There is an inner activity entirely distinct from the intellectual processes of the mind,— the emotional life. Modern conditions oblige education to take account of the emotional life, and to provide for its proper regulation.

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The Activity of the Emotional Nature. We often hear it said that present conditions of life allow little scope to the emotional nature. Every one has his work to do, and that work is of a kind that makes unceasing demands on his mental activities. With their minds held closely to their daily tasks, people cannot afford to give free play to their feelings. Every child that leaves our schools will be called on to do his share in the world's work. His duties will be too exacting to permit the indulgence of his emotions.

This is a necessary feature of our industrial civilization. But it is entirely different from former conditions of life. Moreover, our present system of life contains something utterly repugnant to some of our deepest and most powerful instincts. Our industrial era is beyond a doubt the greatest collective achievement of mankind. The world is better fed, better clothed, and better housed than ever before. Yet there is something lacking. We have an instinctive longing for a form of inner activity which mankind enjoyed in all former ages, but which is denied to us now in our working hours.

There is no need of defining in precise terms what is meant by this activity of the emotional

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nature. We all know the inward stirring that comes from healthful, happy activity of any kind. A brisk walk on a frosty day or a delightful sail on a breezy lake normally gives us this undefinable sense of inner well-being. All our interests, pleasures, and enthusiasms have this accompaniment. Life is warm, glowing, and radiant when our faculties are engaged in any occupation which, by its pleasure or interest, makes a strong appeal to us. This inner activity is purely emotional in nature. It may be identified with some precise emotional state, such as love, joy, triumph. Or, equally well, it may be undefined in character, without taking on any precise color or outline. In either case the sense of spiritual expansion and well-being is very much the same.

Under the environment in which the human instincts were formed, the work by which man wrested his living from nature provided a constant emotional stimulus. In his hunting and fishing, in his hiding from deadly foes or his stealthy attacks on them, primitive man experienced a never-ceasing glow of feeling. This inner glow and warmth became fused with every activity. How different from the cold mental and mechanical processes

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which now make up a day's work! Yet human nature is exactly the same now as it was then, and the instinctive need of emotional activity is just as pressing.

The Need of Emotional Exercise. What is the world to do? Its emotional nature demands an outlet, but its environment does not afford this outlet in its workaday activities. Short of changing the environment or changing human nature, — both downright impossible, — the only thing to do is to take advantage of every opportunity for emotional activity afforded by life as it is. That is exactly what the world tries to do, as best it can. But the situation is so new that the world has not yet learned to adapt itself perfectly to the change. One of the pressing tasks of education is met here. It is our duty to fit our future citizens for the environment in which they will be placed. To this end we must train them to find a healthy outlet for the imperious demands of their emotional natures.

These demands are indeed imperious. The emotional nature will not submit to being entirely suppressed. When it is denied all healthful activity, it will sooner or later break forth violently. Serious disorders of conduct are then inevitable. This

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is one of the great perils of our exclusively industrial civilization. Strikes, violence, drink, vice,— disorder of every kind is sure to occur where people are condemned to a life of unrelieved toil. What we as educators are called on to produce is the type of citizen who does his day's work regularly and steadily, with no recurring interruptions due to outbreaks of rebellious spirit. Our whole community life demands that kind of citizenship. We cannot fashion it by a system of education which seeks to repress the instinctive need of emotional activity. On the contrary, we must recognize the need, and train our pupils to take advantage of the means for its fulfilment which our community life now offers.

Pleasure and Emotional Outlet. The overwhelming majority of people are forced to find their emotional outlet in the pleasures and occupations of their leisure time. Comparatively few of us are so happily placed that our daily tasks afford the outlet. The glow of enthusiasm is indeed felt by the novelist creating his characters and plot, the inventor eager to perfect a valuable device, and the lawyer pleading his case. But it is work of an entirely different kind to add endless columns of

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figures, measure yards of cloth, or stick pieces of metal into a machine, one after another. Work of the latter kind,—drudgery as a means to livelihood,—falls to the lot of most people. Education must provide the emotional outlet for the great mass of workers.

All the amusements in which the working world indulges have been instinctively designed for the purpose of affording emotional exercise. Dancing, the oldest amusement of a distinctly emotional type, owes its astounding present vogue to its potency in this direction. Athletics and outdoor sports of every kind allow modern man to live over again the emotional experiences of the hunting and fighting stage. The universal craze for moving pictures is another evidence of the popular hunger for something to stir the feelings. Social diversions, reading, the theatre, gambling, card playing, politics,—the list could be enlarged indefinitely. Finally, and most important on the cultural side, art in every form derives its value from its direct and powerful emotional appeal.

Emotional Activity and Conduct. Consistent good conduct is impossible without a normally regulated emotional activity. Denied this in their daily work,

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people are obliged to find an outlet in their enthusiasms and pleasures. Any form of amusement is better than the complete starvation of the emotions. But it would be a great mistake to believe that all forms of enjoyment are equally beneficial. Broadly speaking, we may say that amusements and other leisure occupations fall into two general classes. One class is upbuilding and regulating, the other demoralizing and degrading.

Demoralizing Amusements. It is everywhere recognized that pleasures which are associated with gambling, rowdyism, vulgarity, and dissipation are a detriment to community well-being. Laws have been passed in many states against horse-racing (or rather against the gambling for which it is conducted), against cock-fighting, pugilism of the more brutal sort, and other questionable amusements. That these things tend to lower the moral tone of those who indulge in them is generally understood.

Another type of disorganizing amusement is seen in the craze for sensationalism, the love of scandal, the feverish devotion to the yellow journals, the lewd jest, the low theatrical show, and the lurid moving picture, — vulgarity, in short, in all

its forms and manifestations. These are all types of indulgence in unhealthful emotional stimulants. They are all objectionable from the point of view of community welfare. Their effect might be described as emotional dissipation. They afford inner activity, though of a disturbing kind. Unhealthy and unregulated emotional activity always expresses itself in disordered conduct.

Healthful Emotional Activity. Far different is the effect of those enjoyments which afford an exercise to the higher emotions. These are in the best sense a recreation ; they daily create anew the love of order, the sense of duty, the spirit of cheerful application. Pleasures and leisure occupations of the desirable kind act as an emotional regulator. Under modern conditions they are essential to good conduct.

It is coming to be recognized that the community has an interest in providing healthful amusements for the people. Parks and playgrounds, public libraries and recreation centres,— all are maintained for this purpose. But it is not enough to provide people with the opportunities for beneficial recreation. They must also be provided with the taste and the ability to enjoy them.

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Taste and Emotional Bent. Taste in enjoyment is a matter of emotional bent and disposition. Some people have a taste for debasing pleasures, because they enjoy the emotional reaction aroused by them. In the same way, the higher forms of refined pleasure appeal to people who enjoy the stirring of the higher emotions. Each individual has his own emotional bent, and by it his taste in pleasures is determined.

The Training of the Emotional Nature. It would be a great mistake, however, to believe that the emotional bent is fixed and unchangeable for each individual. On the contrary its tendency is determined mainly by the influences exerted in childhood. A direction can then be imposed on the emotional nature, which will continue throughout the individual's entire life. This is a task for education.

The taste for refined and uplifting pleasures, with the ability properly to enjoy them, must be imparted in the impressionable years of childhood. We see here the practical value of all culture studies. They furnish the most important means at our disposal for the training of the emotional nature. The imparting of the ability really to enjoy the

great works of art and literature is not by any means a purely ornamental part of education. Culture studies have a distinct practical utility. They foster refinement of character in a direct and positive way. They implant in the growing child the habits of well-regulated emotional activity. In short, culture studies are one of the important moral agencies of education.

Of all the forms of emotionally uplifting enjoyment afforded in modern life, music is preëminently the most important. In direct consequence music is the most valuable of the studies at our disposal for the training and regulating of the emotional nature. To this fact is due the large measure of time and attention now devoted to music in the elementary school curriculum.

Music and Emotional Education. Music has a definite function in modern education. Its purpose is: (1) To train the child in the habits of healthful emotional activity; (2) to furnish him with the foundation of a cultured taste, which will enable him in all his later life to take full advantage of the opportunities for healthful emotional recreation afforded by the most potent of the arts.

In order that education may derive every possible

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benefit from music, the subject must be taught with a clear understanding of its purpose. The time devoted to the study is ample, provided it is judiciously employed. A great deal of ground is to be covered in the course of eight years, and each step must be regulated with a view to the ultimate purpose of the study.

Because of the number of periods allotted to music in the weekly plan of lessons, the subject must of necessity be taught by the grade teacher. It is essential then that the teacher be well acquainted with the purpose of the study, and that she understand the exact bearing of each element of the course. The music supervisor naturally gives the teacher the support of his professional musical knowledge. He, too, understands fully the educational function of music. But that does not relieve the teacher of the same necessity. It is not enough for her to be versed in the music studied in her particular grade. A general grasp of the entire course is essential to good teaching.

CHAPTER II

THE EMOTIONAL CONTENT OF MUSIC

Expression in Music. Music is commonly defined as "the art of emotional expression in beautiful sound." This would be a satisfactory definition if we could only agree on what is meant by emotional expression. Some confusion on this point is to be observed in the works of many writers on the subject. Several different meanings are arbitrarily assigned to the word "expression," and the reader is often left in doubt as to the true function of music.

Much of this confusion arises from a failure to point out the difference between the expression of emotion and the expression of thought. With thought, expression and communication are the same thing. With emotion, on the other hand, the two are entirely distinct. Language is the medium usually employed for the expression and communication of ideas. Music is often called the language of the emotions. Many people are thus led to be-

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lieve that emotion can be precisely stated and communicated in music, just as ideas are stated and communicated in language. As we shall see, this is true only to an extremely limited extent. It is an entirely mistaken notion of the function of music to hold that its only purpose is to convey to the listener an exact knowledge of the composer's emotional states. Music has a much broader field than this.

Self-expression. Shall we say then that the purpose of music is to serve as a medium for self-expression on the part of the composer? This view also would be too limited. Music does no doubt enable the composer to obtain the relief afforded to his feelings by giving active expression to them. Whether he has in mind an imaginary audience to whom he speaks, or whether the mere putting of his musical ideas on paper or playing them for himself is a sufficient outlet, — these are questions which only the composer himself could answer. We may rejoice that he does find an outlet for his emotions by embodying them in music. But his music does vastly more for those who listen to it than would be accounted for on any exclusive self-expression theory.

The Hearer's Emotions. The chief usefulness of music to the world hinges on its power directly to stimulate the emotions of its hearers. That it has this power is a matter of common knowledge. Listening to a great masterpiece does more than merely inform us of the composer's inner experiences. Vastly more important than that, we are enabled actually to live through the same inner experiences ourselves. This is where the great value of music in modern life is seen. The music that we hear arouses emotion in us, — not the composer's emotion, but our own. Of all the means at our command for satisfying our emotional cravings, music is preëminently the most effective and gratifying.

Beautiful Sound an Emotional Stimulus. Whence music derives the power to arouse emotion in the listener is a question that need not be discussed here. The inquiry would lead us into remote fields of emotional psychology. It is enough for our purpose to know that the power is based on an influence which beautiful sound exerts on the emotional centres. Any sounds or series of sounds which, because of their beauty, give pleasure to the sense of hearing, cause an emotional stirring of a distinct kind. Music's power over the emotions is an

aspect of its beauty. There is an intimate relation between the auditory and the emotional centres. Whatever pleases the ear, in its purely auditory capacity, must at the same time stimulate the inner nature to activity.

Can we distinguish between inherent beauty of sound and the power to give pleasure to the sense of hearing? No! The two are exactly the same. There is a common proverb that "every eye forms its own beauty." The statement applies equally well to the ear. When we say that a sound is beautiful, all we mean is that it affords a purely auditory pleasure. In our next chapter we shall try to distinguish between what ought to please the ear, and what, with many people, actually does.

The Intellectual Content of Music. We must be careful not to confuse the intelligible meaning of sound with its purely sensuous beauty. A meaning conveyed in sounds of any kind may well give pleasure, and so have a marked effect on the emotions. I can well imagine that if a lawyer should say to me, "You have fallen heir to a large fortune," the hearing of this statement would be thoroughly enjoyable. But the pleasure would be afforded by the meaning, not by the tonal quality of the law-

yer's voice. It is an entirely different form of pleasure from that afforded by the warbling of a delightful song-bird. In the latter case there is no intellectual content whatever. The sheer sounds themselves give pleasure to the ear, and the mind is not concerned in the experience.

Pure Auditory Pleasure. Music is made up of sounds which afford a purely auditory pleasure, sounds which in themselves are as meaningless as a song-bird's note. Listen to a single tone played on a flute or violin, or a single chord on the piano or organ. The ear derives a definite pleasure from such sounds. They awaken an emotional response, while they leave the mind not a bit wiser or better informed. The single tone of pleasing quality is the material of which music is made. Musical tones are combined in two ways; in succession they produce melody, and when sounded together they have a harmonious effect. Neither melody nor harmony contains in itself an inherent power to speak to the intellect or the understanding.

Expression and Communication in Music. We have said that music's power to convey precise emotional states is rather limited. Many states of feeling, — joy and sorrow in particular, — are con-

veyed intelligibly by the sounds of music. The contrasting effects of the major and minor modes are too well known to call for more than passing mention. Martial feelings are clearly embodied in many stirring marches. Passionate love has been beautifully portrayed in a large number of immortal passages, notably in the second act of "Tristan and Isolde." The buoyant exhilaration of activity in the big affairs of life is clearly felt in the first movement of the "Eroica Symphony." Poignant grief is overwhelmingly expressed in the second movement of the same work.

But while this list could be greatly extended, it would not be safe to conclude that all great music portrays some precise emotional state. On the contrary, the great majority of compositions have no definite message. Beethoven's "Violin Concerto" or the "Kreutzer Sonata," Schubert's "Ninth Symphony," the "Preludes" to "Lohengrin" or "Meistersinger," — an almost endless list of master-works could be cited which would be devoid of intelligible content, on the emotional side, to a listener who did not know in advance what they are supposed to embody.

Even in the matter of a prevailing character of

joy or sadness, it is a mistake to hold that a composition must have one or the other. Such passages as the slow movements of Beethoven's "Seventh Symphony" and Dvořák's "New World," to mention only two out of a great number, take their color from the mood in which we listen to them.

The Appeal to Pure Emotion. Music's most powerful appeal to the listener is pure, undefined emotion. Here its most useful function is seen. The more keenly its sheer beauty is felt and enjoyed, the more potently does music open up for us those obscure but vivid experiences of spiritual activity for which we have no precise name. And it does this by its beauty alone, independent of any defined emotional or intellectual content. Even when music has a decided emotional color, the elements of auditory pleasure and pure feeling must be present. This is in fact the essence of music, — sounds which please the ear and so arouse the pure emotional state. Other features may be added, but they never overshadow this in importance.

Analysis of Musical Enjoyment. To just what extent the mind is concerned in musical enjoyment is a question which was at one time very widely

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discussed. A theory of musical appreciation was formerly held which was the direct opposite of that now generally adopted. For the sake of clearness it will be well to state the rejected doctrine first, as the present idea will then be more readily grasped : "When the sounds of music are heard by the ear, the impression is at once carried over to the mind. Here the sounds are judged, their beauty is passed upon, and the ear is permitted to enjoy them according to the measure of beauty the mind finds in them. At the same time the emotional content of the music is analyzed, and a message is transmitted to the emotional centres, telling them what feelings are to be aroused."

That the foregoing is far from a correct analysis of what takes place in the enjoyment of music is now generally believed. What actually occurs is held to be this : In proportion to the pleasure which the ear itself takes in hearing music, a more or less powerful impression is at once transmitted directly to the emotional centres. The ear itself is the sole judge of musical beauty and auditory pleasure. It does not need to call upon the intellect to pass judgment and decide whether sounds are worthy of being enjoyed in the hearing. On the emotional

content of music, also, the mind is not called upon to pass a decision. It is not true that the impression of music follows a path from the ear, through the intellect, to the emotions. The path followed leads from the centres of hearing directly to the emotional centres.

Value of a Programme. Yet it cannot be denied that the mind is usually, or at any rate frequently active when we listen to music. We analyze the impression made by the music, and seek to satisfy ourselves what emotions are being called into play. We want to know why any particular emotion is aroused in us, — what the music tells us that makes us feel sad or merry, martial or tender. First we observe the emotional impression, and then we analyze the music in the attempt to account for it. There seems to be an instinctive tendency for us to do this. We want to know what our emotions mean, whence they come, and what causes them. So we try to connect a story with each musical work we hear. We like best those compositions which tell their own story, or those for which we can easily make one up for ourselves. We want to hear the words of a song, — to understand the plot and dialogue of an opera, — to see the action on

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the stage. At first thought one would say that the music interprets the words and the action. As a matter of fact the words and the action really interpret the music. Even a suggestive title is often enough to satisfy the desire for a programme, — Schumann's "Träumerei," the "Spring Song," the "Funeral March."

The mental analysis of the emotional states induced by music is of course generally subconscious. Few people have the habit of introspection developed sufficiently to enable them to figure out exactly what their own inner processes are. Most people would simply say, if called upon to describe their impressions in listening to music, that they enjoy the music, and that it paints certain pictures and tells certain stories for them. Powerful as the emotional stirring is, they usually take little cognizance of it. Yet the greatest pleasure they receive from music is the emotional stirring and glow, even though this takes place in inner regions on which they seldom bring the light of attention to bear.

All that we have just said applies with especial force to children. For them a programme of some sort (as the musical philosophers would call it) is almost indispensable to the enjoyment of music.

This is a matter of no small importance in the child's musical training.

It might be assumed from the foregoing that the highest enjoyment of music depends on the ability to interpret its meaning, — to understand the story it tells, to visualize the picture it paints, or to formulate its precise message to the emotional nature. This view is held by the great mass of people, particularly by those to whom so-called "classical" music is more or less a mystery. People of this kind are often heard to say "I don't understand music." They believe that those who are initiated into the mysteries of art music are able to find a definite meaning in it, which is not revealed to them.

The Highest Musical Enjoyment. This, however, is far removed from the truth. The truly cultured lover of art music does not even think of "understanding" it. He may have begun with that, in the earlier stages of his training in appreciation. But he has advanced gradually to the point where music is to him a spiritual experience, utterly independent of thought. He does not try to decipher a meaning in such works as "Warum ?" or "Moment Musical." True, the reading of programme notes and other analyses may have familiarized him with

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various explanations of the meaning of the best-known compositions. But he has discarded them all. Now he can enjoy music best by yielding himself to the pure pleasure of listening to it. He lets his emotions flow on as the beautiful strains direct them, and ignores the prosaic details of a hard-and-fast story. This is in fact the only way properly to enjoy the master-works. The spiritual life they unfold for us is higher and purer than the world of concrete thought. Here the soul comes into its own, released for a time from the shackles of our workaday life, and free to soar to those lofty realms where only the pure spirit can live. A concert of great music is to him who really appreciates it an unequalled means of spiritual refreshment and purification.

We cannot think of initiating school children into these higher realms of musical appreciation. That would be altogether beyond their capacities and their needs. On the other hand, we can start them on the road which will bring them in later life to this point.

Music and Emotional Activity. Music is thus seen to have a dual function. It affords a pure pleasure to the sense of hearing, and it provides a

remarkably healthful and beneficial exercise for the emotional nature. Even though the emotional exercise be subconsciously performed, its influence on life and conduct is none the less potent. Nothing would be gained by explaining to people in general that their pleasure in music is largely derived from the inward stirring. That certainly would not add to their enjoyment of it. The more we observe our own emotions, the less capable we are of experiencing them. They subside as soon as we turn our critical attention to them.

Let people enjoy music simply through listening to it. The more they enjoy it, the more profound will be their inward stirring, and the greater will be the benefit they derive from it. Furnish them with an interpretation or an explanation if that helps them to appreciate music. But let us, as educators, bear in mind that we utilize musical enjoyment as a means to an end. While we do not need to reveal the end to our pupils, we know it will be inevitably realized, so long as we induce them to hear music with true pleasure.

CHAPTER III

THE BASIS OF MUSICAL APPRECIATION

The Hunger for Music. A widespread, insistent demand for music can be seen almost anywhere we turn in our modern social life. We cannot walk a dozen blocks along the streets of any city without meeting a hand organ or wandering band. No home seems to be complete without its automatic music-maker. Phonographs and player-pianos are being turned out from the factories by hundreds of thousands. The number of people who learn to play and sing has increased marvellously in the past few years. Wherever people meet for pleasure or relaxation music seems a vital necessity. At the theatre and the picture-show, at the little social gathering, or the public meeting of any kind,—everywhere there must be music.

The world has turned instinctively to music as the most available and satisfactory form of emotional exercise. Nobody reasons out the matter.

People simply feel the inner hunger, and take the best means at hand to gratify it. Music is pre-eminently the best means open to the great mass of the people, and their impulse to avail themselves of it is purely instinctive and unreasoned. There is twenty times more music in the world to-day than there was even as recently as a few decades ago.

Art and Popular Music. To estimate the present importance of music in our community life, we are not safe in relying on the statements of the musical historians and critics. They deal only with that small portion of music which they recognize as belonging to art. In the view of those concerned only with art strictly speaking, the rag-time dance and the popular song are worthy of no consideration whatever. Yet these latter furnish the musical pleasures of the great majority of the people. There are, in short, two distinct types of music,—the artistic and the popular. In the previous chapter we had in mind the emotional value only of music of the truly artistic type. Let us now consider certain aspects of popular music.

Everybody recognizes the difference between the two classes of music. Almost nobody enjoys them both equally well. There is a comparatively

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small body of cultured music lovers, who hold only to the artistic type and look with extreme dislike on the popular. On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of people love only the popular music, and are rather antagonistic toward what they consider "classical." The line between the two classes is easily drawn. Any one, cultured or uncultured, can hear and feel that Mendelssohn's lovely "Spring Song" and the atrocious rag-time version of it popular a few years ago belong in entirely different classes.

The great mass of the people, as we have said, would thoroughly enjoy the rag-time version of the "Spring Song," and derive absolutely no pleasure from the lovely original. In other words, the musical taste of the world is at a deplorably low level. More than nine-tenths of the music made nowadays is thoroughly bad and vulgar. This vulgarity of popular music is distinctly a modern development. Any one whose memory goes back thirty or forty years cannot fail to notice how steadily the level of popular music has deteriorated during that time. Year by year the output of the popular composers gets worse. Where twenty-five years ago songs such as "The Banks of the Wa-

bash" were fairly representative of the popular taste, we have to-day songs of hopeless vulgarity.

Evil Effects of Bad Music. From the sociological point of view, this is distinctly a bad condition. The emotional exercise afforded by bad music is not by any means an unmixed benefit to the community. Vulgar music is one of the emotionally upsetting pleasures mentioned in Chapter I. Its effect on the inner life is entirely different from that of good music. The world would be vastly better off if all vulgar music could be abolished, — provided, of course, that something better be put in its place. No doubt it is better to have people get their pleasure from rag-time rather than from dog-fights and gambling. But how much better still our community life would be if all the people could find an habitual emotional activity in listening to the uplifting strains of the great masters!

The Appeal of Trashy Music. Why does trashy music appeal so powerfully to people in general? This is by no means an easy question to answer, and yet the whole problem of musical education turns on the point. We can see in the first place that a vulgar taste will naturally enjoy vulgar music. But this does not answer the question. The

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mass of the people are not vulgar, nor do they detect any vulgarity in their favorite music.

Let us see first what the uncultured really enjoy most in music. On this point there can be no doubt, — their greatest interest is in the melody. Cultured music lovers derive profound pleasure from the balanced formal structure of a composition, from technical excellence of performance and artistic rendition, from moving harmonies and blended qualities of tone. But for the uncultured this would have no appeal, and the music they enjoy does not furnish it. Melody (including of course its integral factor of rhythm) is almost the whole of music for people in general. Melody is also of course an indispensable part of art music. But only the cultured can enjoy the melodies of Mozart and Brahms ; to the uncultured their works seem devoid of melody. In other words, people enjoy music just in so far as they can distinguish and follow its melodies.

The Enjoyment of Melody. Why are trashy melodies easy for the untrained to grasp, and good melodies difficult? A satisfactory answer to this question will throw much light on the whole matter of appreciation. What is involved in the grasp-

ing of a melody is a peculiar function of the memory. The musical phrase is the basis of melody. Every melody consists of a succession of these phrases, each one made up of a number of notes. In order that the phrase may be accepted as melodious, it must be grasped in its entirety. The memory must retain the first note, and every intervening note, until the last one is heard. When each note is forgotten almost as soon as the next one is sounded, the effect of melody is not made on the ear. But when the ear is backed by a memory capable of retaining its musical impressions for a minute or two, it grasps the contour of a phrase, and so enjoys it as melody.

Melody and Musical Memory. Simple tunes of the popular type are always made up of very short melodic phrases, usually of only three or four notes. Nobody's memory is taxed when called upon to retain so short a phrase. Art music, on the other hand, is to a great extent made up of much longer melodic phrases. It is on this account that the uncultured ear cannot grasp it. An ear capable of grasping only a few notes at a time is bewildered by melodies such as those in the third movement of Beethoven's "Ninth Symphony" or the Prize

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Song from "Die Meistersinger." Before the middle of any phrase is reached, the beginning is forgotten, and the whole composition makes no pleasurable impression. Naturally people have no desire to listen to music which gives them no pleasure. For the enjoyment of art music there is needed the ability to retain each phrase long enough, on first hearing, to grasp its melodious outline. Most people have not this ability. That is the reason why art music does not appeal to the masses.

Musical memory is therefore a highly important element in appreciation. We must be careful here not to confuse two aspects of musical memory. The ability readily to learn melodies by heart, so as to sing or whistle them from memory, is not precisely the ability we have just been considering. True, there is a close connection between the two. The more easily we commit tunes to memory, through repeated hearing, the more readily do we grasp the melodic significance of music which we hear for the first time.

The Cultivation of Memory. Musical memory is a natural gift, which is possessed in fairly equal measure by all normal people. Like most of our other natural gifts, it reaches its full measure only

when it is developed and exercised. Practice in listening to good music is an efficient exercise for the melodic memory. Without any thought of the gift, or any intention of cultivating it, the mere habitual listening to good music would of itself suffice to cultivate it. Any one who could be induced to listen to the master-works often enough would almost inevitably learn to enjoy them, simply through the unconscious training thus afforded to the memory.

A Course in Appreciation. Let us imagine the case of a man who never has heard a note of good music, and who makes his first acquaintance with the true art by hearing Beethoven's "Ninth Symphony." There is a possibility that he might derive some pleasure from the experience. But the chances are that he would do nothing of the kind. Looking on the composition as a sample of art music, he would probably refuse ever afterward to have anything to do with it.

Suppose, however, that the experiment could be made of giving him a genuine education in the art of listening to music. A course could be laid out for him that would lead gradually, from the simple works suited to an unformed taste, to the greatest

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masterpieces. The course would begin perhaps with some stirring marches, such as Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever" and the "Soldiers' Chorus" from Faust. For the first year he would attend, two or three times a week, concerts made up of works on this general level,—Strauss waltzes, folk songs sung by a good quartet and soloists, songs from the light operas of Gilbert and Sullivan and Victor Herbert. Let there be frequent repetition of the same numbers, each programme containing some works previously heard and some new ones. Compositions of striking melodic design should be repeated often enough for the melodies to impress themselves on his memory, so that he will recall them in the intervals between concerts, and whistle or hum them for his own enjoyment.

A year's experience of this kind would almost inevitably awaken a genuine love for good music. The course would then be continued by introducing slightly more advanced works. The simpler songs of the great writers,—Schubert's "Serenade," Brahms' "Wiegenlied," Schumann's "Grenadiers," and others, sung, of course, in the language he can understand. Overtures of marked melodic character would be in place here, such as "Merry Wives

of Windsor," "Wilhelm Tell," "Semiramide." A gradual advance would be made, works of slightly greater complexity being introduced month by month. Within four or five years our student, if endowed with the normal capacity for musical enjoyment, would be able to appreciate the greatest works of the masters.

During the first year or two of the course here outlined, the student's attention would be turned mainly to the melodies he heard. His progress would consist for some time of a growth in the ability to grasp the melodic outline of compositions. In this he would advance steadily.

Gradually at the same time his outlook would broaden, and he would begin to pay some attention to the other elements of musical beauty. His ear would become ever finer in its discriminations, better able to appreciate the beauties of pure tone and of combinations of tone colors. He would learn to enjoy harmonies for their own sake. He would become more critical in his judgments of performance and rendition. Hearing, for example, the same aria sung by several different artists, he would be led to compare them, and to note the particular merits of each performance.

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Probably our student would adopt the habit of reading the programme notes, and so gain an insight into the meaning of form. After attending a concert or opera he would read the comments of the critics, and thus become initiated into the trained observer's point of view. Everything essential to a genuine enjoyment and love of good music could be mastered through a well-graded course of attendance at musical performances.

Several points of value in general education are brought out in the imagined course just described. For one thing the musical training of our supposed student has been an experience of pure pleasure. He has learned to enjoy by enjoying; nothing more has been required of him. His faculties have indeed expanded in several directions. But this has demanded no effort on his part beyond the attention gladly paid in listening. His power of appreciation has expanded through its own exercise. This is thoroughly in line with the basic principle of education. The mastery of a simple task enables us to take up with facility one slightly more difficult, and so on in an almost limitless progression. Our powers of comprehension grow by the exercise of learning that which is just within our

reach. What is utterly beyond our powers to-day will be easy for us six months or a year hence, when we have attained to it by the system of gradual approach. This principle applies to our enjoyment of the beautiful, as well as to our mastery of the true and our worship of the good.

The Elevating of the Popular Taste. A general raising of the popular taste in music is greatly to be desired. It would result in a corresponding elevation of all our social and moral standards. The whole conduct of our community life would be bettered. To bring about this advance in taste is one of the tasks to be accomplished by school music. There are indeed other agencies at work. Free music in the parks in summer, and community concerts in general, all contribute to the advance. The phonograph is converting its thousands every year, and is teaching them to enjoy good music. But the school alone, through its influence on the growing generation, can ultimately reach the entire body of the people. Moreover the school alone deals with children at the impressionable age, the only time when an effective direction can be given to taste.

From the sociological point of view, good music

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is the most desirable of all the means of diversion which cater to our need of emotional exercise. Its effect is always healthful, purifying, and uplifting. The habitual and frequent enjoyment of good music is in short a moral tonic.

Music is also the most available of our emotionally stimulating pleasures. Summer or winter, in the city or the country, indoors or out-of-doors, music can equally well be enjoyed. No other form of pleasure can be had more cheaply. If there were a sufficient popular demand for concerts of good music they could be given profitably at prices no higher than those of picture and vaudeville shows. And the songs we love we can sing at no expense whatever. What the world would be like if bad music were abolished and good music put in its place we can only imagine. But we may be sure it would be a good place in which to live.

CHAPTER IV

THE ELEMENTS OF THE MUSIC COURSE

The Aim of Study. Viewing the subject in one light, we might say that the purpose of the school music course is realized when we initiate the child into the highest and fullest appreciation of good music. If we include under the head of appreciation every kind of higher pleasure and beneficial inner activity obtained through the enjoyment of art music, the statement is indeed true. It is in fact merely another way of formulating the definition of music's purpose given in our first chapter. We know that appreciation can be taught in some degree by having people listen regularly to good music. Why cannot this plan be followed in the schools? Why not have concerts for the entire school once or twice a week, and dispense entirely with sight reading and class singing?

The Value of Kinæsthetic Impressions. There is a very good reason why such a course as this would

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not be effective. What we have to accomplish is nothing less than the initiation of the child into the artistic life embodied in music. To do this, we must make a profound and lasting impression on his emotional nature. The time at our disposal is limited, and we must use it to the best advantage. A general rule of pedagogics applies here:— The quickest and at the same time the most lasting impression is made on a child when he is allowed to enter actively into the doing of things. He does, of course, receive some impression from seeing a thing done. But when he does it himself the result is a hundredfold more effective.

This applies with special force to music. What are known as kinæsthetic impressions are of the utmost value here. In order to obtain the desired educative results from music, the child's nature demands that he himself shall take part in the performance of the music. That is vastly more impressive for him than merely listening to music performed by other people. Nerve centres are then called into activity which remain quiescent when he is only a listener. And it is precisely these centres that are most important for us to reach. In other words, the muscular centres must be concerned in

the activity, in order that music may make the desired impression on the emotional centres. The child feels with peculiar directness the emotional effect of the music he produces himself.

The Necessity of Class Singing. Nature provides every child with a musical instrument on which he can perform with no instruction whatever,—his own voice. Through its own instincts the voice is instantly responsive to the will. On every man-made instrument the fingers have to be trained to find the notes,—a long and tedious process. But Nature's instrument, the voice, needs no training of this kind. Long before they reach the school-going age, children have their voices under perfect command, so far as producing the notes they wish to is concerned. They sing naturally and spontaneously, in response to the constant flow of feeling which wells up within them. The child has an instinctive desire to sing. Our only effective plan in school music is to seize on this instinctive desire, and to utilize it for our own ends. It is inevitable then that the children's own singing must furnish the medium for their musical training.

The Need of Vocal Training. The voice, as a natural instrument, has a marked peculiarity. There

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is a right way of using it, as well as a great variety of wrong ways. Nature provides no guarantee that a child will produce his voice correctly. On the contrary, the chance of his hitting on the correct manner of vocal production without competent instruction is extremely slight. When the voice is correctly used it grows and develops through the exercise of singing. But if it is improperly managed it does not improve with use; it tends rather to become harsh and unmusical. Serious injury to the throat may easily be caused by the habitual wrong use of the voice. The danger of vocal strain is even greater in childhood than in later life. Instruction in vocal production is therefore an indispensable element of school music.

Artistic Singing. Music is a thing of beauty. To be effective in education its full beauty must be made manifest to the child. The loveliest melody ever written can be ruined if it is sung with harsh tone and cold mechanical delivery. To have the children use their voices correctly in their class singing is not enough. It is necessary also for them to sing with a beautiful quality of tone. A fine body of vocal tone produced by a class reacts powerfully on the emotional nature of every child in it.

Even to beautiful tone there is still something more to be added, in order that class singing may have its best effect. This is the artistic element strictly speaking, — the feeling and expressive singing of the melody which reveals a lively sense of its pure beauty. Music sung by children in this spirit becomes for them a living thing of alluring character. That is one of the impressions we wish to make. We want to initiate the children into the artist's conception of music. The most effective way to do this is to have them sing artistically themselves. Our instruction must therefore aim to secure a beautiful quality of choral tone, and an artistic performance of the music under study.

Sight Reading and Correctness. Music cannot be sung artistically unless it is first of all sung correctly. The notes must be sung exactly as they are written, in correct time and intonation. Any one inexperienced in teaching music will hardly realize what this implies. It seems an easy matter to learn songs by rote. Almost anything in the line of popular music can indeed be memorized in this way. But popular music is utterly unsuited to our purpose. So soon as we enter the realm of art music we have to deal with compositions which

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cannot be committed to memory and sung correctly entirely by rote. Here a knowledge of the rudiments of musical technique is absolutely necessary. To sing a song of any complexity in correct time and tune is almost impossible without a knowledge of notes, intervals, and time values. If rote singing alone were made the material of study, a child's progress in music would stop with the type of simple melodies taught in the lowest grade. Beyond that point he cannot advance without learning the rudiments of musical technique. Sight reading is the backbone of the school music course.

Sight Reading and Musical Memory. In addition to the matter of correctness just considered, sight reading is indispensable for a number of other reasons. In the first place, there is a close connection between musical memory and the knowledge of musical technique. We read in the previous chapter that the basis of musical appreciation is the ability to grasp a melodic outline, and that this involves an exercise of the musical memory. The ability is indeed improved by the mere experience of listening to music. But its advance is much more rapid when the experience is coupled with a knowledge of notes. A knowledge of sight reading is an enor-

mous help to the grasp of new melodies. Any one versed in the rudiments of music is able to appreciate melodies in a way that cannot be explained to one devoid of this knowledge. His enjoyment of music is correspondingly greater.

Another aspect of the musical memory was seen in the ability to learn melodies by heart. This is a matter of great importance in school music. For the melodies under study to have their full educative effect, the children must commit them to memory. The wider the range of fine compositions they thus store up, the greater is the benefit they derive from the course. Now the ability to memorize melodies easily is greatly advanced by a knowledge of sight reading. In the school course of eight years a cumulative effect is seen. With the progress in sight reading there is a corresponding progress in the musical memory. Less time and effort are needed to learn each new composition. This applies specially to songs learned by rote, which continue to be a necessary topic of study, to some extent at least, throughout the course. Its most important bearing, however, is seen in the finished result, — the developed power of appreciation for which the course is designed.

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Ear Training. The training of the sense of hearing is an item of great importance in musical education. We refer here to the physical sense of hearing, — the ability to apprehend tone qualities in their almost infinite variety. Here again the value of sight reading is seen. No matter how good an ear for music an individual may have, his sense of hearing demands cultivation for him fully to appreciate art music. The habit of attentive listening to music affords of itself a valuable exercise for the ear. But for satisfactory ear training the habit of listening must be seconded by a knowledge of notes.

Musical tones vary in pitch, in quality, and in loudness. The trained ear detects with remarkable keenness the slightest difference in any of these characteristics. Familiarity with the intervals of the scale is the foundation of ear training. Only with this familiarity and the habit of intelligent attention fostered by it, can the ear attain to its full powers of sensory discrimination. The treasures of beauty contained in music are unlocked only to those who possess the cultured faculty for apprehending tone qualities and intonations. A knowledge of sight reading is therefore essential to the

adequate appreciation of all the music that is heard.

Rhythm. Rhythm is another element of music for whose appreciation a knowledge of the rudiments of technique is required. Every musician knows how vital a part of melody is represented by rhythm. Without attempting to go deeply into the subject, we may say that the rhythmic flow of a melody is fully as essential an element of its structure as its succession of intervals. Here again, acquaintance may do much to establish the feeling on which appreciation rests. But without a knowledge of time values and their notation acquaintance loses fully half its effectiveness. To fulfill its task properly the school music course must include the study of the technical basis of rhythm.

The Three Elements of Instruction. Thus we see that the school music course must be made up of three elements, — appreciation, choral singing, and sight reading. It would be untrue to say that any one element is more important than either of the others. The course of instruction must be designed to give the needed emphasis to all three. What the course aims at is an initiation into the artistic life of music. Only when we give this meaning to

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the word "appreciation" do we grasp its full significance. Appreciation is then seen to involve an understanding of the nature and structure of music. This is a complex subject. It includes a knowledge of intervals and rhythms and of their notation, a keen and cultivated sense of hearing, a wide acquaintance with representative compositions, and a cultured sensitiveness to the beauties of the art. While these items can be stated separately, they are closely interwoven in practical instruction: No one item can be made the exclusive subject of study, even for a single lesson.

The place of each element in the course, — appreciation, choral singing, and sight reading, can now be defined. Sight reading furnishes the material of study. Class singing is the medium in which the study is carried on. Both together work for appreciation. In the following chapters we shall consider separately each of these elements, our work concluding with the combination of all three in a single lesson.

CHAPTER V

THE TEACHING OF APPRECIATION

Our Problem. A peculiar problem is met in leading children to form a good musical taste. There is almost never any need of inspiring them with a love for music of some kind. That they always have. The difficulty is that the overwhelming majority have a decided taste for bad music. Almost before they learn to talk, they begin to hear trash. All through their earliest years they continue to hear it on every side. By the time they reach the school-going age their taste is usually formed for the lowest kinds of music.

To eradicate this taste, and to substitute for it a real appreciation of the true art, are tasks calling for a well-regulated line of procedure. (Very similar to this is the problem presented in the appreciation of art. Children begin to pore over the atrocities of the comic supplement long before they learn to read. Their taste in matters of art tends to be

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hopelessly vitiated before the school can take the first steps in inculcating a good taste.)

The Value of Interest. Nothing whatever would be gained by trying to force children to like good music. That would only antagonize them, and fix their determination not to like it. Our policy in this regard must rather be to present art music to them in such form that they cannot help enjoying it. Drudgery and boredom must be absolutely removed from the entire course. At all costs the work must be made attractive and interesting to the children. Only by appealing to them through their own interest and pleasure can we hope to gain our end.

The Child's Love of Melody. Our first line of approach should be through the child's instinctive love of melody. We must rigidly exclude all exercises and drills of a non-melodious and mechanical character. Even for instruction in sight reading, tunes and little melodies are the only safe thing to use with children. Let the children hear nothing and practise nothing that does not contain melodies of a type they will enjoy. Text and exercise books should be made up exclusively of such materials. Even adults would be hopelessly bored by

the dreary repetition of dry *sol-fa* exercises. How then can we expect children to endure drilling on them without aversion?

The child's appreciation of melody is to be fostered by a course somewhat similar to that described in an earlier chapter. That is, we begin with melodies of the very simplest character, so sweet and pretty that after singing them a few times he cannot help liking them. A skilful gradation of melodies is to be applied throughout the entire course. We have the advantage that every melody thus used is memorized by the child. This secures a steady advancement in his ability to grasp a melodic contour, more effectively by far than would result from mere listening. In consequence he finds a correspondingly increased pleasure in hearing and learning each new melody.

His Desire to Sing. Another avenue to appreciation is through the child's innate desire to sing. Children sing instinctively, just because they love to. All the exercises we use must be of a "singable" character. Every vocalist knows that some melodies are much easier and more satisfactory to sing than others. Songs and exercises ought always to be selected by authorities who are singers suffi-

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ciently trained to know what suits the voice. To cater properly to the child voice requires a high degree of skill in this matter.

No satisfactory technical rules of composition have ever been formulated to offer a basis for judging a melody's suitability to the voice. Only the experienced singer can decide, and then only by singing the phrases himself. It is a well-known fact that the composers who wrote most effectively for the voice,—as Mozart and Rossini,—had themselves studied singing for this express purpose. Children will derive much more pleasure from singing songs and tunes suited to their voices than from those not so well adapted to them. Another point involved here,—the advantage of the same type of melody for vocal training,—is reserved for later discussion.

The Use of a Programme. We noted in Chapter II that people generally like to have a “programme” or some other help to the understanding of the music they hear. This is especially true of children. They are normally incapable of appreciating music in its “pure” aspect. They want to have a story, or an explanation of some kind, for every little composition they learn.

It is easy for us to cater to this desire. For one thing, much of the work we do will be on words; the text itself, with occasionally a few words of explanation, will suffice. The tactful grade teacher will never be at a loss for something that will fit each song or exercise. "This is the sound of the rain drops beating against the pane," — "This is what the birds sing when they fly home to their nest," — a phrase like one of these will suffice for a large number of little compositions. What the child demands is not appositeness. It makes little difference to him whether the music would actually suggest the idea he attaches to it. All he needs is an idea of some kind which he can associate with the music. This satisfies his curiosity and fixes his thoughts, and that is enough for him.

The plan of giving an explanation for every piece of music might well be extended to the assembly songs, and to the assembling and dismissing marches. Let the children know the name of every march; tell them of some real or fancied occasion at which it was played, — some local, historical, or national significance it has, — what it means in the opera in which it occurs, and any details available. So also with the songs sung by the entire school in assem-

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bly. Something can be said about each one that will give the child's mind an idea to associate with it.

Selection of Compositions. In the training for appreciation we have to consider more than is included in the actual class work. It was remarked in the preface that this receives hardly more than one-half the time devoted to music in the school. An important feature of the course is the marches played for assembling and dismissing. These have so marked an influence on the child's taste that they deserve to be selected with great care. Only the very best of march music should be used and everything of a trashy, popular type should be rigidly excluded. The marches ought to be of marked rhythm and melodic outline, and of a character to appeal to children. There is a wealth of such music to choose from. A large enough number may be used in rotation to keep any one composition from growing stale or trite.

Never should a note of bad music be tolerated in a school. This is a matter of the utmost importance. Children hear so much trash out of school that we cannot afford to let them hear any of it in school. We frequently are met by the demand to

“give the children the kind of music which people enjoy.” This demand must be opposed with all the determination we have. Our purpose is not to give the children some musical pleasure as a break in the routine of their studies, but rather to teach them to take pleasure in the kind of music that benefits them. Naturally we seek to combine the two ends. But the progress in this combination is gradual. We can never accomplish our purpose by permitting trashy music in school.

There is such a wealth of good music from which to select that we can never be at a loss to find appropriate compositions for every use. In the past few years our folk-song literature has been enriched through the discoveries of a number of enthusiastic searchers. Almost forgotten songs in great numbers have been found in the remoter districts of several countries, notably England, France, and Italy. The entire literature of folk song should be drawn on very freely. Numerous melodies suited to the grades are also to be found in the works of the masters. The hymn literature of the church is another almost inexhaustible source. Children love to sing hymns, a love which deserves every possible encouragement.

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The words of songs and exercises are also a matter of great importance. The greatest care should be used in the selection of texts. As far as possible, of course, they should be suited to the music. Further, they should be poetic in conception and perfect in phraseology.

A Unified Plan. All the music of a school should be under one central control. In most cases this will naturally be the music supervisor. His concern is not properly limited to the grade instruction in sight singing. The choice of marches, assembly songs, and pieces for special occasions will with great advantage be controlled also by him. To make the course fully effective the entire musical life of a school must be coördinated. This can be accomplished only when some competent authority has charge of every item. Even the singing games of the lowest grades are not beneath the supervisor's notice.

Every note of music played or sung in the school contributes its share, either to the formation of a good taste or to the opposite. It is poor economy to allow some of the music to nullify in part the good work of the rest. Benefit to the training in appreciation can be derived from everything that is

done, provided each item is wisely selected and its relation to the whole clearly understood.

Training by Indirection. Training in appreciation can be imparted only by indirection. It is impossible to teach children how to enjoy. All we can do is to put before them in the most attractive manner the things they should enjoy. They themselves must be left to do the rest. And they will take the right pleasure in good music if it is properly presented to them. The music period can be made so attractive to them that it will be a welcome break in the day's routine. The pure emotional glow induced by the music will be all the more keenly enjoyed because it is subconsciously felt. It will be a healthful rest from the necessary tedium of other studies, and a refreshing preparation for the next tasks.

The capacity for the proper enjoyment of music will develop insensibly, simply through its own habitual exercise. There is really not much that we can do for appreciation, beyond assigning the right music and seeing that it is taken up in the proper spirit. In addition to this we can point out the special beauty and charm of each little composition as it is being studied, and so teach the

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children to recognize what is really beautiful. We can explain to them in many cases how well a melody expresses the text to which it is set, thus making them observant for this particular element of interest in their musical studies. But in the main we must rely on the child's native capacity for pure musical pleasure.

The Scope of Instruction. If we succeed in implanting a sound appreciation of good melody in the elementary school, the purpose of the course will be fairly well fulfilled, so far as concerns the subject of appreciation. The child will thus be trained to love and enjoy art music for its own sake. He may then safely be expected to continue the musical habits thus formed, and to develop his powers of appreciation further through his own efforts. It is better to do this much thoroughly than to attempt more and fall short of full accomplishment in anything. But in a well arranged and properly conducted course, much more ground might be covered.

Singing in two, three, and four parts will profitably be undertaken so soon as classes are far enough advanced in sight reading to learn the various parts without too great an outlay of time. In every

large school there will be enough boys with well-developed tenor and baritone voices to give a good balance of tone in concerted music. Three and four part music for female voices is just as effective, where a sufficient number of contralto voices can be found. Training in part singing has a high educational value. It furnishes the best possible insight into the beauties of harmony. The reaction on the emotional nature is extremely enjoyable and beneficial.

The Storing of the Memory. A valuable feature of the music course is the storing of the child's memory with fine melodies of every type. We never forget the songs we learn in childhood; they well up in our minds constantly throughout all our later life. If the songs themselves are good we never tire of them. In passing we must notice here a marked difference between good music and bad. Good music cannot grow old. We listen with never failing pleasure to works which we have heard a thousand times and know by heart. "Träumerei," "The Spring Song," "Hark, Hark, the Lark," — we cannot possibly hear them too often.

Any bad composition, on the other hand, soon

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palls on even the most ardent devotee of trashy music. Each season brings forth a new crop of popular favorites, each of which has its short vogue and is then discarded. Songs which everybody once sang and whistled — "Snookyookums," "That Mysterious Rag" — would be hissed off the stage of the cheapest vaudeville theatre to-day. Let us fill children's memories with the good melodies. These will never fail to be a source of pleasure to them. They will serve moreover as a standard of comparison, to be applied unconsciously but none the less effectively to everything they hear throughout all their later lives.

CHAPTER VI

THE NATURAL METHOD OF VOCAL CULTIVATION

The Conflict of Methods. Every one interested in music knows that methods of vocal cultivation have long been a subject of controversy. Probably on no other topic of education have so many conflicting theories been advanced. Within recent years, however, there has been a marked change in the spirit of those professionally concerned with the training of artistic singers. Vocal teachers are now fairly near to an agreement on the most vital topics of their art, — much nearer than the general musical public is aware. The utterly chaotic condition which prevailed down to a few years ago has been in great measure cleared up.

In place of a large number of methods, no two of which seemingly had anything in common, there are now only two distinct schools of thought. On the one side are those authorities who advocate the so-called scientific method, based on the singer's direct conscious control of the muscular operations

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involved in vocal tone production. The advocates of the natural instinctive method of vocal management represent the other school. The term "psychological method" is sometimes applied to the latter system, for the reason that it was first brought to notice in the author's *The Psychology of Singing*. Fortunately for us, we are not called upon to decide between the claims of the two schools. There is no question that the natural method is the only one that can be satisfactorily followed in the elementary school music course. This method has been abundantly tested in the schools, and it has been found in every way adequate to the demands made in class instruction. We shall therefore review the natural method at some length, dismissing the scientific system with only a brief outline.

The Scientific Method. The scientific method of vocal cultivation is founded on the study of breathing, vocal-cord action, and resonance. It consists of exercises specially devised for the control of the diaphragm and other breathing muscles, for the management of the vocal cords in the various registers, and for securing the proper influence of the resonating cavities of the chest, pharynx, and head. Individual lessons are absolutely demanded by this

method, and it is on that account utterly unsuited to class instruction.

Basis of the Natural Method. In the natural instinctive method no notice whatever is taken of the mechanical or muscular aspects of tone production. The vocal organs are left free to act as their own instincts prompt them. Even the opponents of the instinctive method now agree that it was the system followed by the famous Italian teachers of singing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. (See "Imagination and Fact in Voice Culture," by Frederick W. Root. — *The Musical Quarterly*, Jan. 1917.) Its basic principle is that the voice is guided by the ear; whatever sound is called for by the ear the vocal organs adjust themselves to produce. In their adjustments the vocal organs are directed by an instinct with which Nature has endowed them. They operate without any conscious guidance or control on the part of the singer himself.

Manner of Study. Only three things are required in the cultivation of the voice by the natural method, — a keen sense of hearing, familiarity with the sound of a pure musical tone, and practice in singing tones of this character under the guidance of the ear. It is recognized, of course, that the

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vocal organs have only one correct mode of producing perfect musical tones, and that this correct mode of operating must be imparted through judicious instruction. But the instruction does not take the form of exercises in muscular and mechanical control. When the student sings his daily exercises with a clear mental conception of pure tone, always listening closely to his own voice, his vocal organs gradually fall into the way of operating in the correct mode.

The mental conception of pure tone is the basis of all practice in the natural method. This is dependent on the ear's actual experience in hearing tones of the correct musical type. There are several ways in which the ear of a student can be made familiar with the sound of correct vocal tones. The most convenient and effective plan is for the teacher occasionally to sing a few tones or a short passage, and for the student to listen closely and hear exactly how these tones sound. The student guides himself then in his practising by imitating the tones sung for him as a model. This was the plan universally followed by the old Italian masters. "Listen and imitate" was in fact one of their favorite maxims.

A Skill Habit. It need not be assumed that the untrained voice is in every case incorrectly produced. A fair proportion of children come to school with voices entirely free from faults of any kind. But in comparison with the cultivated voice of the finished singer, the untrained voice is always crude and undeveloped; it is in other words managed without skill. Vocal training consists simply of the acquirement of skill in the handling of the voice. When faults of production are present they must be corrected in the course of study. But it would be a mistake to assume that faults are always a characteristic of the untrained voice.

Faults of Production. Faults of vocal production are of two types,—the nasal and the throaty quality of tone. Each of these has exactly the same character in both the singing and the speaking voice. Everybody knows the sound of the nasal and the throaty tone. Both are harsh and unmusical blemishes on a voice. Both are due in most cases to bad habits which could be easily corrected. Our besetting linguistic sin in this country is the nasal speaking voice. This is unfortunately so prevalent that many people's ears are blunted to it by constant familiarity. The throaty type of

voice is almost as prevalent in England as the nasal voice is here. Which is the more objectionable is a matter of individual taste. Either one is extremely unpleasant to the sensitive ear.

Correction of Faults. The means adopted in the natural method for the correction of faults are extremely simple. First of all the student is brought to hear the faulty quality in the tones of his own voice. Where calling attention to the nasal or throaty quality does not enable him to detect it, the teacher imitates the fault, and then sings a few tones correctly. The student readily notices the different qualities in the teacher's voice, and his attention is then more intelligently directed to his own tones. Once the student hears that his tones are either throaty or nasal, he easily corrects the fault, in most cases by practising with the correct quality of tone in mind.

Imitation of the Model Tone. To train voices successfully by the natural method the teacher must have a fair command of his own voice; he must be able to sing correct tones as a model for the pupils' imitation. Further, a remarkably keen ear is demanded of the teacher, capable of detecting the slightest trace of throaty or nasal quality. A keen

sense of hearing is, in fact, almost the most valuable asset a vocal teacher can have. There is a vast deal to be learned about the voice, simply by listening to it. Nothing more than the effort of attention in listening to voices is needed to open up a really wonderful insight into the operations of the voice.

Vocal Faults and Throat Stiffness. Every marked fault of vocal tone production is heard by the experienced ear to be associated in some way with an excessive strain or tightening of the singer's throat. Not only do we hear that the tones are nasal or throaty; we also feel that the singer is straining or pinching his throat in producing them. This feeling points the way to the correction of those faults which do not yield to the simple treatment of inducing the student himself to hear them. Many singers and students habitually stiffen their throats so soon as they start to sing. Some nervous predisposition seems to be at the seat of the trouble, which is only rendered worse by calling attention to it. For students with a marked tendency to throat stiffness the only remedy is a system of exercises designed to bring about a complete relaxing of the undue muscular tension. Relaxing exercises con-

sist mainly of single tones and descending scale passages, sung on the vowel *ah*, with the mouth widely but easily opened. These are practised on a freely exhaled breath, the tone approaching either a sigh or a yawn in quality.

The Course of Instruction. In a course of lessons by the natural method comparatively little time is devoted to the correcting of faults. Lesson after lesson will go on with hardly a word said on the subject. It is only in extreme cases that positive measures of remedy need to be taken. With the great majority of pupils it is seldom necessary to do more than occasionally point out that the tones verge on an objectionable quality.

The constructive work of vocal training consists of the student practising his assigned exercises, imitating as well as he can the model tones sung for him now and then by the teacher. From week to week his voice improves in freedom, in beauty of quality, and in facility of management. The progress is gradual and uninterrupted. There are no marked transition points, nothing in the nature of a series of problems to be mastered one after the other. The student advances at a uniform rate along the three parallel lines of keenness of hearing,

mental conception of pure tone, and facility in singing. All he is called on to do is to listen closely to the teacher's model tones and to his own singing, and to practise his exercises day by day.

Ear Training. In the course of this study the student's ear becomes ever keener and more attentive, and better acquainted with the meaning of correct musical tone. The sound of the voice in its perfection becomes thoroughly familiar to him. He learns to recognize perfect tones when he hears them sung by another artist, and to detect any incorrectness or imperfection in other people's voices as well as in his own. Correct vocal tone thus takes on a positive meaning. There is a freedom and ease of delivery about a perfectly used voice, which is instantly recognized when once the ear becomes familiar with it. The tones seem to flow forth without restraint. A faulty tone on the other hand seems to be caught and held somewhere in the singer's throat or nose.

A Graded Course. Nothing but conscientious practice, continued over a period of perhaps two years, will bring the voice to the correct mode of emission. But this practice is all that is needed, provided the work is done under the guidance of a

teacher with an experienced ear and a well-managed voice. Provided also that exercises of the right character are adopted. In Chapter V we remarked that there is a certain type of melody which favors the growth and development of the voice. Every song and exercise used must consist of melodic passages of this type. Further, the work must be so graded in technical difficulty that the voice is led on insensibly from the easy to the slightly more difficult. What proportion of the exercises are practised on simple vowels and what on words is a matter of minor importance. The most successful teachers of the natural method use songs with words from the very beginning of instruction, and have at least half of every pupil's lesson and practice time devoted to work of this character.

The Musical Atmosphere. An important feature of the natural method is the musical atmosphere in which the student is led to develop. The technical training of the voice is approached from the side of musical beauty and expressiveness. The student's constant ambition is to produce the most beautiful tones of which his voice is capable. His fellow-students share the same ambition, and the teacher steadily encourages it. An atmosphere is thus

created in which musical beauty is held up as an end worthy of one's best efforts. This has a direct influence on the voice itself. Nature has provided that the vocal organs respond instinctively to the singer's mental and emotional states. The stimulus to the imagination given by the ever-present ideal of tonal beauty reacts directly on the vocal organs. A happy and even slightly exalted frame of mind furnishes the most favorable condition for the voice. Now this is just the frame of mind which beautiful melody induces. It follows that the more keenly the student loves and appreciates the melodies he sings, the more rapidly his voice advances toward perfection.

A Systematic Method. It must not be inferred that the natural method consists merely of haphazard singing. The human voice is peculiar in this regard, that no amount of practice will lead to perfection, unless the practice is judiciously guided in the right direction. Merely to memorize and practise exercises is not enough. But to practise with a correct model of tone always in mind, to listen to oneself and to strive constantly for tones of the correct type, to avoid falling into unconscious habits of faulty production, — that is not in any

sense haphazard singing. Instruction by the natural method is indeed unobtrusive. It does not take the form of explanations, rules, admonitions, and corrections. But it is genuine instruction none the less.

Posture and Breathing. Authorities on the natural method do not deny their debt to the scientific knowledge of the voice. But they see no need of imparting this knowledge to the singer. Even the efficient teacher may do perfectly well without it, provided he has learned to produce his own voice correctly, and has had sufficient experience in listening to the voices of others. There are a few mechanical principles which may well be borne in mind, but these are extremely simple and rudimentary.

The singer should stand or sit in an erect yet easy and graceful position, with the shoulders well squared, but without any stiffness of bearing. This position allows the breathing muscles to function to the best advantage. Beyond the matter of posture the mechanical aspects of breathing call for no direct attention, as the singer's natural instincts suffice to secure the proper action of all the muscles involved. The mouth must be opened wide enough for the correct formation of the vowel to be

sung, without the jaw being stiffened or strained. Breath should be taken in through the mouth and the inspiration should be quick and noiseless. A gasping sound in inspiration is an evidence of throat stiffness; if very bad it may call for special correction, although in many cases the trouble will gradually correct itself in the course of study. Beyond the points here enumerated no attention need be paid to vocal mechanics.

The Child Voice. Thus far in this chapter we have spoken only of the training of the adult voice. Many people think that the child voice is in some way different, and that it does not conform to the same laws. This view is altogether misleading. The child voice responds just as readily to the natural method as the adult voice. Naturally the form of instruction has to be adapted to the child's mental and musical equipment. We cannot safely plunge the child at once into an advanced musical atmosphere nor expect him to take a mature interest in artistic vocalism. On the other hand, his tendency to imitate unconsciously the models of tone set before him is very marked. In every other respect also his voice obeys the instincts on which the natural method is founded.

Throat Stiffness and Vocal Strain. That permanent injury to the vocal organs may be caused by the habitual wrong use of the voice is a matter of common knowledge. Owing to the immature state of the muscles, cartilages, and nerve fibres, children's voices are specially liable to injury of this kind. No grade teacher, however, need be worried by the fear of allowing pupils to fall into injurious habits of voice production.

An absolutely unfailing insight into the mode of vocal production is furnished by the sounds of the voice itself. If the tones give evidence to the observant hearer that the singer's throat is extremely tense and stiffened, then that voice is in danger. But if the sounds produced are free from the evidence of exaggerated tension, the child is in no danger of injuring his throat. It must be understood that we are speaking here of throat tension in a highly aggravated degree. No risk attaches to singing with a slight degree of tension. Only the finished artist is absolutely free indeed from every trace of throat stiffness. A single voice so badly used as to be liable to injury would, by its extreme throaty and strained quality, stand out in a chorus of fifty children.

Correct Vocal Tone. What we strive for in the natural method is a pure tone, of sweet musical quality, free from any blemish due to faulty production. This is the type of tone best suited to the artistic performance of music. By a beautiful provision of nature, it is also the type of tone most favorable to the voice's development. The daily singing of tones of this type will inevitably bring about a steady improvement in the voice.

Registers. In the teaching of children it is important to have a clear conception of the exact type of tone which is correct for the child voice. It has long been customary to distinguish between two so-called registers in the child voice, the chest and the head. All authorities agree that the tone in the head register is in every way most favorable to the immature vocal organs of the child. This is a light, floating, slightly shrill quality, which the child normally produces untaught in the range from *A* flat to *f*, when singing softly and without effort. No difficulty need ever be met in inducing children to sing in this quality. The chest tone is rather coarse and heavy, in comparison with the bird-like head tone; it undergoes a complete modification, however, in the course of the voice's development.

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under the natural method. If children are judiciously exercised in the head quality of voice from the 1st to the 4th grades, never being allowed to sing louder than a tone of moderate force, they will then fall easily into the way of producing their chest tones correctly. All that is necessary is to have them very gradually increase the power of their tones, during a few minutes of each lesson period. A few months of this practice will bring about a notable improvement in the command of the chest voice.

In dealing with the registers of the voice it will be wise to avoid the conception of this subject adopted in the scientific method. That system limits each register to a certain part of the voice's compass ; instruction is aimed at the management of the vocal cords in the various registers, — an extremely intricate and by no means well-understood subject. We have nothing to do with this in the natural method. The terms "chest" and "head" tones are used solely as names for two contrasting types of *tone quality*. Either quality is produced at will by the trained singer on any note of the voice's entire compass. Soft tones are always in the head quality when correctly produced, and

loud tones in the chest quality. It is much easier, especially for children, to acquire the correct use of soft tones than of loud. That is our reason for limiting ourselves, for the first four years at least, to the singing of soft and medium tones in the head quality. After the voice has acquired facility in the use of head tones, it easily learns to sing the chest quality correctly. A very gradual increase in the power of the tones sung, with care to avoid throatiness, is all that is then needed.

Self-study. The natural method of vocal training is extremely simple, — so simple, in fact, that one who has had no experience with it might be inclined to doubt its efficacy. Yet the grade teacher who is called on to teach this method must have complete confidence in it. Confidence is best founded on demonstration, and the most satisfactory demonstration is made with one's own voice. Any teacher who will devote fifteen minutes a day for three or four months to the practice of singing cannot fail to see how much her voice improves. The teacher should practise the selections which the class is studying; sing them over three or four times each, trying only to get a pure, sweet tone; listen to herself as she sings, and with each repe-

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tition of a passage try to make the tones clearer, brighter, and more musical. The voice will inevitably respond to this practice, and the improvement will continue steadily. In a few weeks it will begin to sound fuller, rounder, and more musical. The grasp of the natural method thus acquired will enable a teacher to handle the class with complete assurance and confidence.

CHAPTER VII

CLASS INSTRUCTION IN VOCAL PRODUCTION

The Natural Method in Class Instruction. In our discussion of the natural method thus far, we have had chiefly in mind its application to the training of solo singers. Let us see now how it is to be adapted to the form of class instruction carried on in the grades. The broad outlines of the method are the same in either case. Voices are trained through the practice of singing melodious passages of music. Whether the students sing one or many at a time, the result is the same, provided the ideal of pure tone is held always in view.

Scope of Instruction. Our aim in voice training instruction for grade pupils is not to turn out finished vocal artists. That would be a beautiful ambition, but it is far beyond our reach. The best we can expect to impart might be summed up as follows: (1) fair command of the voice through a range of about an octave and a half, with the ability to produce a pure musical tone of true intonation

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on every note; (2) control of the various degrees of power, from medium soft to medium loud; (3) a clear, distinct enunciation of the text; (4) a bright and pleasing manner of singing; (5) freedom from the faults of nasal and throaty tone. To accomplish this we have eight years, which is ample time for our purpose.

Requirements of Teachers. For successful instruction in class singing by the natural method, certain things are required of the teacher. She must be able to sing a fairly clear and pure tone through a range of at least one octave. Her sense of hearing must be keen enough to recognize a pure tone, and to detect throaty and nasal qualities, as well as deviations from the pitch. She must have enough confidence and self-possession to sing naturally and easily for the class. This is by no means an onerous set of requirements. A teacher will readily obtain the needed command of her own voice by the simple course outlined in the previous chapter. A few months' experience of attentive listening to a class will afford as good an insight into the operations of the voice as can well be demanded. The other items call for nothing more than attention and determination.

Combined Instruction. When once a teacher has grasped the idea of natural singing, it is found to be an extremely easy and effective method for class work. Nothing is required of the children but a certain manner of singing their songs and sight-reading exercises. No special studies are needed for vocal development. The voice receives its exercise and training in the course of work which at the same time serves as the medium of instruction in sight reading and memorizing.

The First Step. Vocal training begins with the first rote singing period, and goes on without interruption throughout all the grades. From the very start of the course the children are led to adopt that mode of singing which brings about the full development of the voice. In one sense no time whatever is devoted exclusively to vocal cultivation, as everything that is done serves some other purpose as well. Yet everything that is sung has its influence on the voice. It is just as easy for children to sing brightly and sweetly as with harsh, unmusical voices. In the one case their voices steadily improve, in the other they just as steadily deteriorate.

Basis of Instruction. A correct model of singing

supplied by the teacher is very important in the lowest grades. Here the foundation of good vocal habits must be laid. Not a word on the subject of vocal management is to be said to the children. The appeal is always to their instinct of imitation. In these grades the work consists almost entirely of rote singing, — that is, the teacher sings a passage and the children repeat it. They will naturally adopt the teacher's manner of singing. A medium soft tone of bright, pleasing quality is here the only aim, so far as vocal production is concerned. Clear enunciation is also greatly to be desired of the teacher. On the musical side the feeling delivery of the melody is the important point. Let the teacher's singing be always bright and animated; let it give the impression of pleasure and of interest in the little songs being studied, and the children will be led to adopt the same mental attitude toward the music.

Gradual Advance. What has just been said applies to the voice training work throughout all the eight grades. Success depends on the mental disposition of the children, and on the model set before them. Perfection of tone should always be our aim, but we cannot expect to attain it quickly.

What we seek is the formation of a skill habit, and that takes time. Further, vocal progress depends on the training of the ear and the development of the musical nature,—two lines of advance which cannot be hurried. The progress will not be rapid, but it will be sure and steady. From week to week the improvement may not be noticeable, but from grade to grade it will be.

Musicianly and Slovenly Singing. Our approach to correct singing is always on the musical side. We should never allow our classes or ourselves to fall into a dull, listless, mechanical manner. Everything is sung brightly and with expression. We strive always to give life and meaning to the melody. Classes often fall into the habit of singing sluggishly, of slurring from one note to another, and of dragging the time. Singing of this kind is usually a sign of lack of interest. At any rate, it should not be permitted. Slurring from note to note is a very bad habit, almost certain to lead to throat stiffness; it has also a bad effect on the child's own ear, and on his taste as well. Scolding a class is not the way to rouse it out of sluggish singing habits. An appeal to the ambition of the pupils is much more effective, combined perhaps with an exaggerated

imitation of their bad work, and a little gentle ridicule. Children cannot be blamed for singing in a listless manner if they are given dry, uninteresting things to sing. But even with the best adapted selections classes will now and then have their "off days." These are apt to be trying times. In the natural perversity of human nature a bad habit can be fixed in a small fraction of the time needed for its correction. Any selection which a class shows a marked disposition to sing badly should be dropped at once and another one taken up.

Self-consciousness. It happens sometimes that a class seems to be afflicted with what we might call "collective self-consciousness." The disposition to self-consciousness on the part of an individual is of course familiar to every teacher. This is a perplexing subject, calling for the exercise of much tact. It is hard to give any advice in general terms for the handling of a class in this condition. A remedy is often found by diverting the attention, through having some gifted pupil sing the passage under study as a solo, or repeating a song of which the class is specially fond. The teacher must decide whether bad singing is due to class self-consciousness, and what to do in the circumstances.

The Class Tone. At all times the teacher must listen with close attention to the singing of the class. The unison tone of forty or fifty child voices can be made extremely beautiful, even though there is not a single exceptional voice in the entire class. The purer a tone, the better it blends with other tones. While each individual voice may be no better than mediocre in quality, the combined effect may be very beautiful. This combined tone reacts on each individual ear and musical nature. A class can be brought to hear itself as a unit, and to take pride in the beauty of its own singing. A good way to lead up to this is by dividing a class into two halves, allowing one half to sing while the other listens.

Faulty Voices. In a well-trained chorus no one voice should ever be heard to stand out from the others. Only a harsh, impure, or faulty tone will be heard individually in concerted singing. By always listening closely a teacher will soon acquire the ability to pick out any faulty voices which mar the general effect. This calls for some attention even as early as the first grade. There is always the possibility of subnormal voices in every class. With a little experience a teacher will have

no difficulty in deciding whether a faulty tone is due only to bad production, or whether some physical cause is also involved. In the latter case the child should be sent to the school physician or nurse for examination. Satisfactory work in music is not to be expected from children with adenoids or bad catarrhal conditions.

Monotones. Another type of musical deficiency is presented by the so-called "monotones,"—children devoid of the sensory power for pitch discrimination. Children sometimes seem to be monotones while in reality their bluntness to pitch is due only to inattentiveness, or to self-consciousness. But the true type of monotone,—the child with an actual deficiency of ear, is by no means uncommon.

What is to be done with children of this kind is a perplexing question. It would seem unjust to deprive them of any benefit they might derive from the music course. On the other hand, it is an even greater injustice to a class to have its progress retarded for the sake of one inefficient pupil. The best plan probably is not to allow children of distinctly subnormal musical gifts to take part in class singing. They will derive through passive listening all the benefit they are capable of receiving

from music. All in all, subnormal musical ability on the part of an occasional child does not present any very difficult problems for the teacher.

Correction of Faults. The correction of actual faults of production is an entirely different matter. Here the teacher must constantly be alert. Vocal faults are much easier prevented than cured. We must do all in our power to prevent our pupils from falling into bad habits, and to correct any tendency to nasal and throaty quality before it becomes fixed. Throatiness is rather rare with children in the lower grades, especially when they are never permitted to sing louder than *mezzo forte*. Nasality, on the contrary, is extremely prevalent. Unfortunately it is by no means an unheard of fact that half the children in a 1 A class are inclined to a nasal quality of voice. For a class to contain not even one nasal singer is almost phenomenal.

One difficulty we have to face in curing nasality in class singing is due to the very commonness of the fault. The children's ears are blunted to it by custom. It is by no means easy to bring them to hear the difference between a nasal tone and one free from the fault. Practically our only means of direct remedy, however, hinges on the imparting

of this ability. Indirectly we are always working toward a cure of the fault by holding before the class a correct model of tone.

As a rule, only a small proportion of any class will sing with a pronounced nasal or throaty quality. It is these children that we wish to reach with our measures of correction. The time at our disposal will rarely allow us to give individual instruction, — during the lesson period at any rate. To single one child out for correction is indeed a rather questionable step. Self-consciousness is so easily awakened in this way that it is on the whole better attempted only in rare instances. On the other hand, we can generally ridicule a class to itself without danger. No individual feels that the banter is aimed at himself, so no one's feelings are wounded.

To bring the consciousness of nasal or throaty tone home to a class, imitate a passage they are studying; sing it first with a gross exaggeration of the fault, then with a pure tone. Have them repeat it in these two ways, — first faulty, then as nearly free from the fault as they can make it. Compliment them on their grasp of the difference between the two ways of singing, and assure them that the second way is merely less faulty than the

first, not by any means perfect. A few minutes now and then of this instruction will ultimately be effective.

We can hardly hope to bring about a complete cure of vocal faults in any one grade. Little time can be afforded for correction, as the class must be kept up to the schedule of its studies, and its work cannot often be interrupted. But there is no need of our being overcritical in this matter. A slight admixture of nasal or throaty quality does not by any means destroy the beauty of choral singing. So long as we get a pleasing volume of tone from a class, we can afford to rely on the gradual improvement that will surely take place from grade to grade.

Individual Singing. Child voices of great beauty are by no means rare. Indeed a teacher whose class does not possess at least one may count herself unfortunate. That a child with exceptional musical gifts should receive more than his share of attention may be unjust but it is almost inevitable. It will indeed often be an economy to favor a child of this kind. To have one or two pupils who sing especially well is a distinct advantage to a teacher. Such pupils may perfectly well be called on to furnish a correct model of tone for the class, and thus

relieve the teacher in some measure of the necessity of singing. There is some slight advantage in having the model tone given in the child voice, rather than in the adult voice of the teacher. A little individual instruction after school hours, given to a few children with good voices, will well repay the time devoted to it.

The Boy's Change of Voice. The boy's change of voice presents a peculiar problem. General rules are rather hard to formulate in this matter, as so many individual differences are seen in the change. The age at which it begins, the length of time it takes, and the extent to which it interferes with singing, all are subject to wide variations. It is believed by many people that singing is certain to be injurious during the time of change, but this is a rather exaggerated view. The easiest plan is to withdraw each boy from the singing class so soon as his voice begins to break. The boy may be allowed to sit and listen to the class, following their work with his exercise book, and deriving what benefit he can in this way. Discipline, however, may be hard to maintain with a number of boys sitting idle. Other work may be assigned to them, or they may be sent to another class-room. But

this incessant regrouping of classes would be awkward and upsetting.

In the majority of cases boys may with perfect safety sing right through the period of change. They must of course sing softly, and their voices will often be rather harsh and unmanageable. So soon as it is easier for them to sing in the adult range, an octave below the treble, they should do so. The time of change may last anywhere from six months to more than a year. A complete interruption of a boy's musical studies during so many months is hardly to be desired. Some large schools have a special class in music for boys during the period of change, under the instruction of a teacher experienced in handling voices of this type. Where that cannot be done it is hard to say more than that each boy must be treated according to his individual characteristics.

Tenor and Baritone Voices. It is greatly to be desired that every boy be far enough advanced in music to sing a tenor or bass part by the time his voice has taken on its mature form. As a rule, every large school will have enough tenors and baritones in the seventh and eighth grades to make genuine part singing possible. If a boy has profited

as he should by the instruction in the lower grades, he will produce his voice after the change with a reasonable approach to correctness. No new element of vocal management need be introduced. Teachers of classes containing boys of this type must be on their guard against the two besetting sins,—nasality in the tenor and throatiness in the baritone and bass. The tenor often inclines instinctively to pinch his voice in the belief that this enables him to get his high tones more easily. In the same way the baritone and bass make their voices throaty, as this seems to them to give weight to the tones. Both beliefs are equally mistaken. Both faults make the voice harder to manage, while throatiness, in addition, robs it of carrying power. Boys with maturing voices require special care to keep them from falling into these faulty habits.

Breathing. Special exercises in breathing and the other muscular and mechanical operations of singing are utterly without value in the natural method. There is no reason for wasting any time on them. An erect position, either sitting or standing, is, however, a necessity. A minute devoted to gymnastics of the "setting up" variety is some-

times desirable before the class begins its singing exercises. It is better to say nothing at all to a class about breathing. Children can readily be taught by indirection to take breath at the right places, largely through imitation of the teacher's singing. Every exercise will of course be so arranged as not to demand too long a phrase on a single breath. This is not a point of any great difficulty.

Legato Singing. One thing to be constantly aimed at is the clean movement of the voice from note to note. Each tone should be held steadily on its pitch for the full duration of the note; the voice should then move instantly to the next note, without giving a hint of any intervening pitch. It is important that the model singing set before the class should always be correct in this regard. Some little experience in listening to voices is needed for a complete grasp of this point. Daily practice for a few weeks with this idea in mind, listening closely to oneself the while, is also a great help. A fair command of the clean movement from note to note is the foundation of legato singing.

Vocal Drills. For the training of finished solo singers considerable practice is needed on special

exercises of various kinds, in which drill on the individual vowels is included. Exercises of somewhat the same character are rather extensively used in the grades. It is open to question, however, whether this class of work is really necessary in school music. When the natural method is judiciously applied the voices receive all the exercise they need in the course of their *sol-fa* and song studies. The time spent on special vocal drills and single vowel work might more economically be devoted to sight reading and repertoire work.

Enunciation. Clear and intelligible delivery of the text is absolutely indispensable in artistic singing. Special exercises for the tongue and lips are sometimes made a feature of the scientific method, but their use by teachers of the natural method is extremely limited. For our purpose they are not necessary. Correct enunciation can readily be attained through the singer's relying on the guidance of his own ear. A good enunciation on the part of the teacher cannot be dispensed with. An individual's habits of speech are naturally carried over into his singing. If he produces muddy vowels and flabby consonants in speaking, he will sing in the same manner. Habits of this kind must be cor-

rected. Somewhat the same procedure as that suggested for the correction of nasal and throaty tone will be effective here. In both cases the appeal is always to the children's sense of hearing and their instinctive regard for correctness and beauty.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PEDAGOGICAL BASIS OF SIGHT READING

The Most Difficult Element of the Course. By far the most difficult element of the school music course is the teaching of sight reading. This is in fact the crux of the whole matter. The other topics fall naturally into place, provided the method of sight reading is judiciously devised and competently carried out. Incompetent instruction in sight reading may be due to a deficiency on the part of the teacher or to faults in the method. In either case satisfactory work in appreciation and vocal training is impossible. The entire course is then a more or less complete failure. Competent teaching may do much, even with a badly devised method. But the results are vastly better when the plan of instruction is carefully worked out, with due regard both to the objects to be attained and to the pedagogical principles involved.

The Scope of Instruction. In the teaching of sight reading we must of course have a high aim.

But it will not profit us to set our aim too high. We cannot hope to teach children to read a line of melody with the same facility they will possess in reading a printed sentence. The great majority of professional musicians can hardly do that. Even a highly trained body of solo singers, such as the Musical Art Society of New York, is not called on to perform any work without careful rehearsal. The best we can aim at is a certain degree of facility in reading notes. If on finishing the school course a child can take up an average piece of music, without great difficulties of time, intervals, or modulation, and after going over it two or three times can sing or whistle the melody correctly, he has learned enough of musical technique for the purposes of general education. In the limited time at our disposal we cannot hope to impart more than that. It is better to cover thoroughly a course which leads to that measure of musical knowledge than to attempt something more ambitious and leave our work incomplete.

The Sol-fa Syllables. A vast amount of thought and experiment have been devoted to arranging the best possible course in sight reading for the purposes of the elementary school. Methods with-

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out number have been tried, and either improved or rejected. Out of all the experimenting there has finally come a method of instruction which in the judgment of the most competent authorities is thoroughly satisfactory, both in its practical workings and in its adherence to sound pedagogical laws. Before entering on the details of this system a brief historical review will be in order.

The method which has proved its right to survive is a form of what musicians call the "movable *do*" system. This is indeed the historic system, dating back almost to the very beginning of our modern art of music. It is based on a peculiarly characteristic impression which each individual note, or more strictly speaking, each degree of the scale, makes on the ear. Thus the first degree or "tonic" of the scale gives us a sense of completeness, satisfaction, or repose. The "dominant" or fifth degree has a distinctly bold or martial sound. *La*, the sixth degree, breathes defiance and challenge, etc.

This characteristic impression of the different degrees of the scale was first noticed by an Italian monk, Guido d'Arezzo, about the year 1000 A.D. Guido observed that in a hymn well known at that

time (*Ut queant Lux*), the first line began on the tonic of the scale, and each succeeding line on a note one degree higher than the preceding. He showed then how the hymn could be used for teaching the degrees of the scale. Any one who knew the melody could locate each degree by simply recalling the line which began with it. The initial syllable of each line was adopted as a name for its respective degree. These syllables were *Ut*, *Re*, *Mi*, *Fa*, *Sol*, *La*. About two hundred years later the syllable *Do* was arbitrarily substituted for *Ut*, on account of its greater euphony. *Si* was in like manner chosen for the seventh degree when the scale was extended to the full octave. The melody of Guido's hymn has long been lost, but his syllables will probably never be forgotten.

For nearly a thousand years sight reading has been taught by means of the *sol-fa* syllables. As the art of music developed, instruction had to be broadened to include the items of modulation, notation, time values, and key signatures. But until very recent years no sweeping change was ever made in the practical conduct of teaching. Recently, however, as the result of the trials and experiments just mentioned, a change has taken

place, so far reaching that it might almost be called a revolution.

The Alphabetical Method in Language Reading.

In the course of these trials the pedagogical principles involved in sight reading instruction have been subjected to a searching analysis. On theoretical grounds the traditional method has been found unsuitable for the needs of the elementary school. The perfecting of the method now accepted as best was due in great measure to its strict conformity with the laws of pedagogics. Just how these laws apply in sight reading is a question which may most readily be approached through the consideration of a kindred subject, — the teaching of language reading.

Up to hardly more than fifteen years ago language reading had always been taught by the traditional "alphabetical" method. Incessant drill on the letters of the alphabet, and on words of two and three letters, formed the material of the early stages of instruction. That this involved drudgery and even hardship for the youngest school children was looked on as simply unavoidable. The alphabetical method was no doubt effective in the hands of a good drill-master. Conservative

educators would have scouted the idea that it could be improved. The proposal to drop the method entirely, and to substitute for it something simpler and easier, would have been held sheer folly. Yet a revolution in the teaching of reading actually took place, and there is no question now of its complete success.

The Word-symbol Method. The revolution in language reading methods was undertaken for the purpose of relieving the child of the drudgery which had been considered a necessary feature of instruction in the lower grades. It was effected through a study of the subject of mental association. Learning to read involves the forming of associations between the printed symbols and the sounds they represent. In the alphabetical method the individual symbols, each one meaningless in itself, are first taken up and one set of associations is thus formed. Then the letters are taken up as they appear combined in words, and a second set of associations is established. The improved system undertook simply to dispense with the first step, and to establish at once the connection between the word-symbol and its meaning. This seemed a remarkably daring move, but it was fully justified by its success.

in practice. We can see now that it was eminently sound pedagogy.

Yet before the experiment was made, the soundness of the pedagogics involved here would certainly have been questioned. A conservative educator would have criticised the proposition about in this way: "When a complex association is to be established, it is best to proceed by steps. Break the matter up into a series of associations of only two members each. Then combine these into a higher series of two members each, and so on until all the items have thus been brought together. The child's mind is not capable of grasping a form of instruction in which a number of items are combined in a single impression. We must simplify the matter by giving him only as much at a time as he can grasp."

The Fixing of a Complex Association. As a piece of pure theorizing this sounds fairly convincing. Yet even on the theoretical side it leaves out of consideration two very important items: meaning and interest. Both of these facilitate to a remarkable degree the fixing of mental associations. It has been definitely established by countless experiments that significant sentences are memorized much

more easily than meaningless jumbles of words. The value of interest in this connection is also well understood. In the early stages of language reading by the alphabetical method both these valuable aids were ignored. So much for the theoretical side of the subject. On the practical side experience has shown that a complex association involving meaning and interest is just as easily established as a simple association devoid of these factors.

Let us now see what light our consideration of language reading throws on the problems of sight reading instruction. The two cases present an almost exact parallel. Each of the three items we mentioned — the fixing of complex associations, meaning, and interest, has contributed its share in the arranging of the present method.

Association and Drill. To fix a memory association of any kind the most effective means is a series of repeated impressions. Drill in some form is the essential basis of this teaching. Explanation is of little value here, as a mental grasp does not suffice for the desired effect on the memory. Five minutes of illustration will enable a child to grasp the idea that *do* represents a characteristic scale degree sound. But for the automatic mental summoning

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up of this sound a vast number of nearly identical memory impressions is needed.

Yet, on the other hand, we know that a desired mental impression is most easily formed when the pupil understands the meaning of an exercise. Mechanical parrot-like repetition is not an effective form of drill. Dry iteration of meaningless words and formulas makes little impression on the mind ; the motor centres alone are involved in the activity. What properly conducted drill seeks is the fixing of memory associations through repeated impressions on the *mind*. This is best secured when the child keeps the meaning of the repeated words and formulas constantly in view.

Melody and Meaning. At first thought it might seem that this principle cannot be applied in the teaching of sight reading. A succession of musical notes has no intellectual content ; it does not state a fact or embody an idea. There seems to be nothing, therefore, for the child's understanding to grasp. This would be a misleading view of the matter. For the purpose we are considering, a *melodious* succession of notes has the same psychological effect as a sentence of understood meaning. Even though it has no precise intellectual content, a melody im-

presses the mind as something coherent and logical. A succession of notes without melody, on the other hand, seems utterly senseless. See what a satisfactory impression the following little passage makes on the mind :



As a contrast, how empty and tiresome is the following syllabic drill, taken at random from an older work of the traditional alphabetical type :



Sound pedagogy demands that dry, empty exercises on the order of our second illustration be utterly abandoned. All the drills used for impressing the syllabic scale degrees on the memory must be thoroughly melodious.

The Value of Interest. On the score of interest, little need be said. The ugliness of "nonsense jumbles" of notes like the second illustration precludes all possibility of interest. No child can be

blamed for hating drills of that kind. The aversion they produce in the younger children is followed by mental torpor in the upper grades. Melodious drills, on the other hand, keep the pupil's mind constantly alert and impressionable. Even without any conscious effort on the child's part to fix his attention, his interest in the melody induces him to bring his mind to bear on the work and so to secure the right kind of impression. We have seen that melodious exercises are the best material for both vocal training and appreciation. In addition they best serve the purpose of sight reading drills.

The Traditional Method. The traditional method in *sol-fa* sight reading was based on the assumption that "one thing at a time" must be given to the child. As the set of associations to be fixed is rather complex, it was accordingly broken up into its elements. The letters for the lines and spaces of the staff were first taught, followed by the various symbols for notes, rests, time values, key signatures, etc. The *sol-fa* syllables were taken up independently, through the driest kind of exercises. Not until the syllables had been mastered — the labor of several years — were they connected in the child's mind with the printed or written symbols.

Only then was the first attempt made to have the child read direct from the notes. This is the method which has in recent years been abandoned by progressive teachers. The assumption on which it was based is now seen to be entirely mistaken.

A Unified Impression. Simplicity is of course needed in teaching children. So also is a unified impression to be desired. The present method in sight reading seeks to combine simplicity with unity. So soon as the *sol-fa* drills are taken up,—usually in the second grade,—the children are taught to read all the exercises direct from the staff. The older style of oral dictation exercises, both with the syllables and with numbers, is no longer followed in the accepted method. Oral dictation exercises were adopted in sight reading on the now-abandoned theory of giving the child "one thing at a time." They are unsound on pedagogical grounds, their main purpose being only to break up a complex association into its parts. In reality they are no simpler than exercises read directly from the staff. The present system of forming the association at once between the symbols on the staff and the sounded scale degrees is successful in practice as well as correct in theory.

Reading from the Notes. It is greatly to be desired that all sight-reading drills be sung from the notes. As soon as the grade is reached in which exercise books are placed in the children's hands this point presents no difficulty. In some schools this is done in the third grade. But as a rule the books are not given to the children until one or even two years later. In the lower classes the best practice is to use wall charts, which can be seen by all the children, or else to write the exercises on the blackboard before starting the lesson. Both these practices are open to the objection that they involve extra expense for the purchase of the charts, or extra work on the part of the teacher. Where neither the expense nor the extra work can be provided for, a simple and fairly effective plan is the pointing exercise. (Every classroom should have a blackboard with the staff lines painted on it in white, — a great saving of time to the teacher.) The scale is written on the blackboard, with the conventional key symbol, which simply locates *do* — in this fashion :



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The teacher, being familiar with the exercise to be sung, and having the book at hand to prompt her, points with a long pointer to the notes as they follow one after the other in the exercise. Time values are indicated by pausing for the right length of time on each note. Accents are brought out by a broader or more incisive gesture with the pointer.

CHAPTER IX

EXPLANATIONS IN SIGHT READING INSTRUCTION

Topics Calling for Explanation. Thus far we have considered only the principles to be followed in teaching the *sol-fa* syllables, and in imparting the ability to reproduce their sounds from the printed staff. There is little in that work to demand any intellectual grasp or understanding on the part of the child. We have now to take up another element of sight reading, in which the appeal is almost solely to the understanding. Under this head the following topics are included :

1. Whole and half tones.
2. Scale structure.
3. Notation.
4. Accidentals.
5. Modulation.
6. Keys and signatures.
7. Time values, rhythms, and accents.
8. Major and minor keys.

(Notation does not perhaps belong strictly in this class. It has, however, certain features which render its principles easier to point out in this connection.)

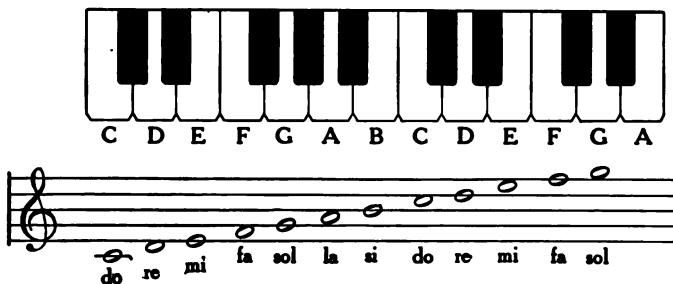
Drill and Explanation. In all those matters which need to be understood by the child, the practice is quite different from that followed in drill for memory association. Drill consists in great measure of repetition. The appeal to the understanding, on the other hand, is a matter of explanation. To repeat an explanation many times over is bad pedagogy. The child is not helped in grasping a point by having the explanation repeated several times. If he does not get a fair inkling of it at the first statement, the matter is beyond his grasp altogether. We must not expect a child to grasp any point too advanced for his stage of progress. When he is ready for it he will grasp it easily. Repeated explanation will not help him to understand a point before he is ready, nor will it be necessary when the right time comes. An understanding of the knotty points of sight reading cannot be imparted through methods of drill. Each point must be brought out by a few minutes of clear explanation, repeated only two or three times in subsequent lessons.

Experience and Understanding. Previous experience with melodies involving the point to be explained is a necessary basis for its explanation. Before any point is taken up, the way should be prepared by a number of melodious exercises and song passages illustrating the point. Familiarize the child with several examples before attempting an explanation. Then he will have a basis of experience on which to build. Let us see how this principle may be applied to each of the topics just enumerated. It may be remarked, by the way, that none of these topics will be reached before the fifth grade. By that time the child will be well drilled in the *sol-fa* scale degrees and their notation. Exercises and rote songs will have made him familiar with a fairly wide range of melodies. This foundation of general experience is then to be assumed throughout the following discussion.

Whole and Half Tones. Probably no child would ever discover for himself that the scale consists of whole and half tones, or notice that a whole tone is twice the interval of a half tone. Yet the keenness of ear acquired in the lower grades will enable him to hear the difference between whole and half tones when it is pointed out to him. When once the ear

has grasped the difference, this point needs no further explanation.

Scale Structure. A number of devices are in use for explaining the structure of the scale, such as the scale chart, the ladder, etc. As an aid to understanding, these devices are of great value. The best of them is probably the keyboard diagram with the staff below it:



This diagram has several advantages. Almost every child has access, at one time or another, to a piano or melodeon. Some acquaintance with the keyboard may therefore be assumed. Further, in the key of C the absence of the black key between E-F and B-C is a graphic representation of the fact that these are the shorter intervals. Finally, the keyboard diagram is in every way a more musicianly device than the ladder or the scale chart.

When the keyboard diagram is used, C major is

the best key in which to point out the structure of the scale, for the reason just mentioned. If the child's ear is familiar with the difference between a whole and a half tone, he will readily understand the manner in which the scale is made up of whole and half tones. That the half tone intervals are *mi-fa* and *si-do* is the most important point for the child to remember. Only the structure of the major scale need be taken up in the sequence we are now considering. That the acquaintance with the scale as a melody acquired in the lower grades will serve as a basis for this instruction need be no more than mentioned. The minor keys may best be reserved for a more advanced stage of progress.

Notation. Sight-reading exercises direct from the staff will have accustomed the child to the rudiments of notation before it is taken up as a formal topic of study. A number of symbols have then to be learned by name and connected with their meanings. This is something in which we cannot safely attempt to force the child's progress. The entire subject of notation need not be covered in less than two years.

In the formal study of notation the first step is to learn the letters for the lines and spaces of the

staff. This is no doubt dry, mechanical work, but it cannot be avoided. Until it is mastered further progress in notation cannot be made. The child must know, instantly and automatically, the letter for the line or space to which the teacher points. Special drilling is needed for the purpose. Home work also may sometimes be assigned with good results.

The further study of notation is best combined with the other topics to be covered. As each one of the points yet to be considered is taken up, the pupils are to be made familiar with the appropriate symbols. This applies indeed to the points already reviewed. There is a mutual support, in the learning, between the musical fact and the symbol which denotes it.

Accidentals. As an introduction to this topic a few simple exercises with words, containing accidentals, are first learned by rote. Great care is to be taken that the exercises are sung with absolutely correct intonation. Then the class is called on to *sol-fa* the exercises from the notes. Where an accidental occurs, the teacher points out that the interval is a half instead of a whole tone. It is important that the children distinctly hear and recog-

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nize the difference in interval. The symbol, sharp or flat, is then named, and its effect on the succeeding note explained. New exercises containing accidentals are now taken up and practised from sight, until the class can read passages of the kind without difficulty.

These exercises may well be illustrated with the keyboard diagram. For the purpose it is best to use the notation of the key of C major. On a short exercise with one accidental sharp, point out that the accidental note is represented by a black key midway between two white keys.

This will be a good place at which to extend the class's acquaintance with the keyboard, to include the names of the black keys. Explain that the black key just above C is C \sharp , etc., and that the note is a half tone higher than C and lower than D. The staff notation of the black keys should also be made clear. Instruction on this point may well be somewhat long drawn out. Not until the black keys are known by their names as sharps need it be shown how each one has another name in the flat series.

Modulation. This is a very important topic, — the first one to present any real difficulty. Before

it is taken up the class will, of course, be familiar with the fact that *do* may be on any line or space. What they have now to learn is, that *do* may change its position in the course of an exercise.

The best change of key to begin with is the passing from C major to G major by sharpening the F. Let the way be prepared by the rote study of a few short passages with words, involving this modulation. Due care is to be taken to have the intonation perfectly correct. Then have the class give the *sol-fa* syllables for one of the passages, reading it from the notes. At the point where the modulation occurs a difficulty will naturally be met. Skip the difficulty for a moment, and show that in the succeeding measures we have *do* on a new note. After *sol-fa*-ing these measures in the new key, go back to the modulation and explain the change of key. Do the same with the other melodies which have been learned by rote for the purpose. Finally, take up new exercises containing the same modulation, and show how easily they are *sol-fa*-ed when the change of key is understood.

Here the keyboard diagram will be of great service.

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Point out that the first measures are *sol-fa*-ed according to the lower staff, and that when we meet the F \sharp we turn to the position of *do* on the upper staff.

When this has been mastered it will be in order to practice some exercises in G major. Explain the key signature of one sharp, and the reason for placing the sharp once for all at the beginning of the staff.

The change of key from C to F by introducing B \flat is then to be taken up in the same manner. Less time will be demanded here, as the general principle of modulation will have been grasped to some extent. These two modulations, into the

keys of the dominant and subdominant, are all that need to be explained. The time at our disposal will hardly permit us to pursue the subject further.

Keys and Signatures. There is no need of imparting to the children a thorough understanding of the relation between signature and key. It is enough for them to know that with one sharp *do* is on G, with two sharps on D, etc. That is purely memory work. It is not even necessary to teach the order in which the sharps and flats are placed in the signature. The signature is, after all, nothing but a conventional symbol to show the location of *do*. Any other intelligible symbol would answer just as well.

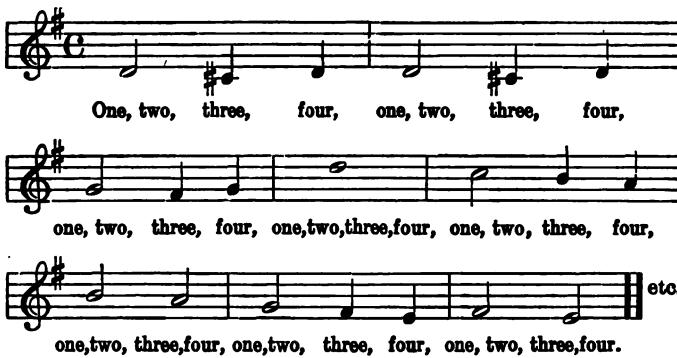
When a new exercise is taken up for sight reading, tell the class at the start where *do* is located. Nothing is gained by having them figure it out for themselves. Constant practice in different keys will familiarize them with the signatures, without any time being spent on this point. Very little drilling is called for here.

There is no good reason for insisting that an exercise must be sung in the key in which its notation is studied. We must have each exercise sung in the key in which its compass is suited to the

child's voice. We may perfectly well write it in C and sing it in F or G. Occasions where this is advisable will often occur. We may wish to illustrate a point which can most readily be grasped in the notation of C major. Exactly the melody we want for the purpose may be too low in range if sung in that key, while the key of G would bring it exactly in the right compass. All that is needed is that the teacher shall sound G as the *do* or keynote. To say that this would blunt the sense for natural pitch is idle. Not one child in a hundred thousand has the peculiar gift of hearing involved in natural pitch.

Time Values, Rhythms, and Accents. Time values should be studied in conjunction with the symbols by which they are represented. Through the constant reading of simple melodic exercises, the children will insensibly come to know that the dark notes move faster than those with open heads. When time values are to be taken up, begin by pointing this out on some suitable exercise. The point will be grasped without difficulty. Then have the class sing the exercise with the notes before them (the melody being known by heart), to the words "one, two, three, four," etc. The meaning

of bar line and measure may best be explained in the course of this work.



One, two, three, four, one, two, three, four,

one, two, three, four, one, two, three, four,

one, two, three, four, one, two, three, four.

etc.

When a few exercises have been studied in this way, the notation of time values may be taken up. Teach the notes first, — quarter, half, whole, and eighth, in this order. The quarter note is best used as a unit, the half being equal to two quarters, etc. The symbols for rests need not be touched on until the note symbols are fairly well known. The effect of the dot is best brought out through teaching based on experience and illustration.

Simple exercises in common time, of pronounced march rhythm, are most favorable for the beginning of this instruction. A feeling for accent will have developed long before this point is reached, notably in the marching to music, which is always a

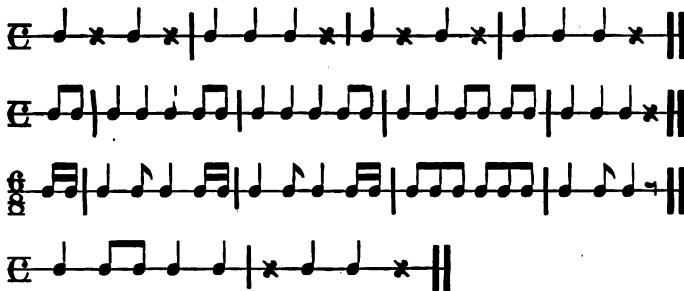
feature of school life. That the first note after the bar line has the strongest accent will readily be grasped.

Exercises in waltz time are next to be taken up, the procedure being very much the same. Six-eighth time is much more difficult than common or three-quarter. It should not be attempted until a class is well grounded in the other two rhythms. Before beginning a new rhythm a song representing it should be sung by rote, and the first instruction is best given on a few measures from the same song.

Nothing is gained by having the children beat time for themselves in the lower grades. The teacher will always beat time for all singing that admits of being directed in that way. The feeling that the accented note comes on the down beat will be well established insensibly, long before the point could be understood. A grasp of time values is almost impossible before the feeling for rhythm and accent has been fixed through abundant experience. It is on the basis of this experience that the most effective work in teaching time is done. After a few years of singing in the lower grades under the baton (or rather pointer) of the teacher, the children will readily grasp the meaning of

"down, left, right, up," etc. An attempt to explain this in advance of the experience would be futile.

A little practice in toneless "tapping" exercises is valuable. The drum, dear to every child, will give us a few good leads. Exercises like the following will appeal to every child:



Minor Keys. It is out of the question for us to teach the difference in harmonic relations between the major and minor modes. But the difference in æsthetic character between major and minor melodies is easily recognized, even by children in the fifth grade. We can, without trouble, teach our advanced classes to read minor melodies with the same facility as major.

A minor melody is best *sol-fa-ed* with the syllables as they would apply in the relative major key, the sharps and naturals that occur being treated as accidentals:

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Where a cadence occurs the children will soon learn to read it without any very clear understanding, guided mainly by their melodic sense.

There should be an occasional use of minor melodies in rote work for some time before they are studied as sight-reading exercises. A word of explanation may be given now and then, calling attention to the plaintive and mournful effect of the melodies. But explanations of the relation between the major and minor keys of the same signature are of doubtful value. It will suffice for the children to know that melodies of mournful type which end on *la* are called "minor," and that most other melodies are known as "major."

CHAPTER X

THE MELODIC SENSE IN SIGHT READING

The Aesthetic Basis of Sight Reading. Reading a line of melody at sight might be looked on as a purely intellectual operation. No doubt the ability to read music can be acquired through strictly mental application, without the aesthetic sense contributing in any way. It may be that an adult could be most effectively taught in this way, provided he had beforehand a keen musical sense acquired through the hearing of abundant good music. But in teaching children it is a bad plan to make sight reading a matter of strictly mental activity. This is obviously true, when we consider that the ulterior purpose of sight reading is the appreciation of good music. It is also true aside from any question of appreciation. Children master the difficulties of sight reading quicker and better when their aesthetic sense is kept constantly alert.

The Feeling for Melody. There is an interplay between the feeling for melody and the ability to

read a melody from the symbols on the staff. Both develop together, each one helping the other. The symbols mean something more than a mere succession of notes, to be sung at varying pitches one after the other. They represent melodic phrases, each one an organized whole which can be grasped only in its entirety. Every phrase of true melody has an aspect of logical continuity. It is like a living thing with a character of its own.

We must develop in the child a feeling for the logical, symmetrical character of each melody. We do this, not by explanation, not by pointing out the structural basis of the phrases. That would indeed defeat our purpose. Instead we simply present each melody as a thing to be enjoyed and loved for its own beauty. The feeling for the inherent logical necessity of a melodic outline then develops of its own accord. As the feeling is quickened, it reacts on the ability to read a melody from the staff.

The Melodic Sense and Sol-fa Drills. All sight-reading instruction, particularly the drills on the *sol-fa* syllables, should be carried out along this general line. From the very beginning the child responds to instruction of this type. He unconsciously adopts the habit of "feeling his way"

among the lines and spaces of the staff. He learns to judge distances up and down by his eye, without counting or "spelling out" the number of degrees from one note to the next. The eye and the ear then work together to pick out the melodic sequence, and they progress faster than the mind can keep pace with them. There is really no reason why children should be expected to attain an intellectual grasp of the principles of *sol-fa*. Through the exercise of the melodic sense they can learn to reproduce the syllables for a line of running melody, without figuring the matter out like a sum in long division.

The Impression Secured through Indirect Teaching. The ability thus to extract a melody from its printed symbols is imparted through indirect teaching. The psychological processes involved are rather obscure. But as they are performed unconsciously by the children, that is a matter of little account. The mind reaches a result without being aware of the steps by which it travels. All we need to know is that the musical faculty coöperates with the ear and the eye in fixing the associations between the printed symbols and the sounds represented by them.

How is this form of indirect teaching to be carried on? The main point is always to keep the study of sight reading in its proper relation as a purely musical operation. That is really a simple matter. Yet when it is done all the other features of instruction fall naturally into their proper place. The entire course of eight years is planned along this line. The appeal is always to the love of music and the interest which children take in attractive melody. Rote singing in the lowest grade prepares the way for the gradual initiation into the rudiments of musical technique. Step by step, then, the child progresses, his mastery of sight reading keeping pace with the advance of his melodic sense.

From the very beginning the greater part of the sight-reading work consists of actual singing direct from the staff. Almost no time is spent on explanations in the lower grades, as no points requiring to be understood are taken up there. Even in the higher grades only a small fraction of the time is devoted to explanations. Actual singing continues to be the main feature.

A Graded Course. Teaching of this kind demands a well-graded succession of compositions —

both exercises and songs — of progressive difficulty. The choice of compositions is a matter of the utmost importance. Wisely selected, they secure that unity of impression throughout the entire music course which is essential to its success. We have seen that one type of melody is best adapted to instruction in all three of the elements of study. The course must therefore be made up exclusively of melodies of this character.

The Choice of Melodies. Phrases from rote songs may be freely used to great advantage. It is a mistake to believe that familiar melodies are of no value as sight-reading drills. On the contrary, the occasional use of known melodic phrases has several advantages. The recognition of a known melody on the staff helps to clarify the child's insight into the real meaning of sight reading. This directly fosters the ability of the melodic sense to assist the ear in fixing the *sol-fa* scale degrees. Conversely, songs which are to be learned by rote for assembly singing may well be first studied as sight-reading exercises, especially in the upper grades. We must never allow our pupils to make a sharp distinction between the compositions used for sight-reading drills and those studied for their musical

interest. Let them see that the songs they love best can be *sol-fa*-ed like any other exercises, and that their *sol-fa* studies are just as worthy of appreciation as their favorite songs.

A very large number of little compositions will be covered in an eight years' course. The wider the range of musical experience thus afforded the children, the more effective the work will be. In the study of sight reading there is a limit to the use that can be made of any one melody. So soon as it has been memorized with the *sol-fa* syllables it ceases to be of any value as a sight-reading drill. The syllables are then sung by rote, exactly as the melody is. Further drill on it would indeed be detrimental, as it would tend to blunt the sense of scale-degree relationship expressed by the syllables.

A well-graded course must be embodied in an adequate set of music reading books. In arranging compositions according to their progressive difficulty, attention must be paid to the three elements, — sight reading, vocal training, and appreciation. There are a number of excellent sets of readers available. The material in any good set can be used in accordance with the best and most advanced method of teaching. An alert music su-

pervisor or head of department will never be at a loss so to coach his teachers that they will be kept constantly in line with the most advanced thought.

The Melodic Method. In the actual conduct of instruction it is well to remember that sight reading is not intended to be a strictly mental exercise. We aim our teaching at the musical faculty rather than at the intellect. A sight-reading exercise is not set before the children as a problem for them to solve. It is a melody for them to sing. As they sing it, reading it from the staff as well as their stage of progress permits, it contributes its share in impressing the *sol-fa* relations on their minds. What we seek is the cumulative impression made by a vast number of melodies sung in this way. Our object is to have the children sing the exercises, not to spell them out painfully and so to miss their melodic significance.

The teacher must, of course, be letter-perfect in every exercise. Only a very capable sight reader can conduct a lesson effectively, reading the exercises herself as she goes along. Any hesitation on the teacher's part would be a serious drawback to the instruction. A few minutes of preparation before the day's music period, — running over the

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exercises to make sure they are perfectly remembered, will help the teacher's work appreciably.

This is the form of teaching which secures the combined activity of the musical faculty, the ear, and the eye. The combined activity cannot be inculcated directly. It takes place naturally however, without direct prompting, when the teaching is carried on in the manner indicated. It need not be supposed that more time is demanded for the mastery of the *sol-fa* relations by this method than by the use of special tuneless drills on the syllables. On the contrary, the melodic method accomplishes the result in less time, and with vastly less labor on the part of both pupils and teacher.

The First Steps. Little real sight-reading work can be done in the lowest grade. Rote singing alone can be attempted here. In the second grade the beginning may be made as an interlude in the study of rote songs. Children readily distinguish up and down, high and low, in the melodies they sing. Point out on the blackboard or chart how the notes on the staff go up and down with the melody. The *do* line or space can also be located easily. Children soon recognize the satisfying

“home” feeling of *do*. A few minutes once or twice a week, covering a period of eight or ten weeks, will probably suffice for this much.

It is advisable to make an early start with the location of *do* on various lines and spaces. The children will thus learn insensibly to feel their way by the distance of each note from the *do* or home note. The conventional symbol for locating *do* will of course always be used. Before beginning an exercise it is necessary to inform the class where *do* is placed.

Do having been learned by its sound when it occurs in a known melody, the ear should then be made familiar with the major scale of one octave. There is an abundance of scale songs for rote singing which serve this end. The scale itself is a pleasing melody when agreeably sung to a single vowel. This latter is an exercise of great value in the training of the ear for correct intonation. It must not be practised often or long enough to become monotonous. But this can in great measure be avoided by varying the rhythmic figure.

Characteristic Sol-fa Scale Degrees. The first entrance into sight reading strictly speaking is made when the child begins to recognize the individual

characteristic sound of each scale degree. The *sol-fa* syllables are first learned by rote, and sung to the major scale ascending and descending, in various rhythms. Then finally the way is prepared for the first real lesson in sight reading. A few words of explanation may be needed here, simple enough for children in the second grade to grasp. The point to be imparted is that each degree of the scale has a name by which it is known. We have seen how much the musical understanding is helped when the mind has something definite to think of in connection with the music. Even though there is no real logical connection between the idea and the music, the mind is steadied by the fixation of thought thus afforded. We can take advantage of this help by giving a meaning to the *sol-fa* syllables. For *do* the meaning of "home" is plainly adequate. Each of the other scale degrees can also be associated with some meaning, more or less plainly indicated by its characteristic sound. As the "leading note," *si* has a sort of "I want to go home" feeling, which can be associated with the word "longing." A little exercise of our credulity may be needed to find any similar meaning or feeling in the other scale degrees. But even so the

child's grasp of the subject will be rendered much easier by an association of the kind. Something like the following list of "definitions" will be found useful :

Fa — Rest

Si — Longing

Mi — Joy

La — Defiance

Re — Movement

Sol — Soldier

Do — Home

There is no need of having these "definitions" memorized, or of devoting much time to their explanation. They serve their purpose by helping the child to a first grasp of the idea of characteristic scale degrees. This is enough to accomplish in the second grade.

Sol-fa Drills. For the next two years (the third and fourth grades) the most important work in sight reading will consist of familiarizing the children with the *sol-fa* syllables and their representation on the staff. This can be carried on perfectly well without the pupils having learned the letters for the lines and spaces. The habit of judging distance and position by the eye, and recognizing the corresponding scale degree, is easily formed and just as effective. As the eye becomes familiar with the appearance of a line of melody on the staff, the

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“up and down” succession of notes takes on a more and more definite meaning. Work in these grades will, of course, be largely in the form of drill. But the drill need not be in any sense mechanical. Nothing but melodious passages is to be studied, and these will always be treated as their beauty deserves.

Where conditions do not permit the use of books, wall charts, etc., the only recourse is to blackboard dictation. This, however, will never be so effective as study direct from the printed notes. It is at best a makeshift.

Nothing is gained by trying to cover too much ground in the third and fourth grades. It is best to devote these years to laying a good foundation in ear training, and in the visual and auditory recognition of the *sol-fa* syllables. When this has been done the child is competent to take up more advanced work. But until this much is accomplished, nothing further can be undertaken with any prospect of success.

The foundation of sight reading is the ability to sound each *sol-fa* syllable instantly, without the slightest hesitation. Coupled with this is the ability to locate the syllable by the position of the note on

the staff. The foundation must be securely laid, or the attempt to build on it will result only in a waste of time and effort. Here is, in one sense, the most important part of the sight-reading course. Experience has shown that this much can be accomplished by the end of the fourth year. But where circumstances do not permit this rate of progress, it is better to allow one or even two years more to the study of *sol-fa*, rather than to leave the work incomplete.

Explanations and the Melodic Sense. So soon as the *sol-fa* syllables and their staff representation have been mastered the scope of the work broadens rapidly. Technical problems are taken up one after the other. As each one is mastered, the variety of the available musical selections is correspondingly advanced. An ever-widening range of compositions is thus brought within the scope of study. Advanced *sol-fa* work continues to be an important item. Explanations are given as the compositions under study call for them. Even here the appeal to the melodic sense is not forgotten.

The problems contained in notation, time, modulation, etc., were not manufactured to make music difficult. On the contrary, all these problems are

inherent in the very nature of melody. Our system of writing and reading music makes them much easier to understand than they would otherwise be. This is the best light in which to present them in teaching. A point such as the difference between common and triple time need not be presented as a problem to be solved mechanically by counting time to notes on a staff. The point is more easily explained when it is first met as a difference between two melodies of contrasting rhythms. Let a class notice the difference between the two rhythms as a matter of musical feeling. On this musical apprehension base the explanation of the symbols by which the rhythms are recorded and read. The practical work of counting time will then be done under the guidance of the musical intelligence, instead of in a dry, mechanical manner.

There is no advantage in having the pupils learn to count time for themselves until they are far enough advanced to grasp the rhythmic outline of a melody in its strictly musical aspect. They then have the necessary support for this work in a musical intelligence far enough developed to make time more a matter of musical feeling than of mental application.

In all the technical problems of sight reading the same principle applies. Under the guidance of the musical sense, the mind finds a shorter way to the grasp of each point than could be afforded by a strictly intellectual path. Experience acquired through the study of melodies illustrating each point is valuable for its effect on the musical sense, rather than on the intellect. An intellectual grasp of the technical problems is, of course, necessary. What we seek is the shortest and easiest way for the pupils to attain the needed intellectual insight. This is found when their mental operations have the support of a quickened musical sensibility.

CHAPTER XI

PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF CLASS INSTRUCTION

Class Teaching and Choral Conducting. Any teacher who has sung in a choral society will see a marked resemblance between the work done in a rehearsal by the conductor of the chorus and her own work in teaching class music. When a new composition is taken up for study, the conductor generally has the entire chorus run through it once, reading it as well as they can, in order to give them a general outline of its character. Then the different voice parts are taken up separately, the sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses each studying to become familiar with their notes. When some progress has been made, the combined effect is again tried.

With each repetition the conductor is able to devote more attention to matters of expression, shading, tone quality, etc. The conductor really instructs the chorus in the music under study. He ought to be a good enough musician to read each part at sight with absolute precision. Failing in

this he must have studied the composition well enough for him to commit to memory all the passages too difficult for him to read at sight.

What the choral conductor strives for is: 1. A letter-perfect performance of the work, exactly as it is written. 2. A fine, sonorous, and beautiful quality of tone. 3. An artistically expressive rendition, with all that this implies.

A conductor of mediocre ability is apt to take up these three items in the order just given. First he drills the chorus until they know their parts. Then the matter of vocal tone is taken up, in the attempt to smooth out all the roughness and crudity into which the singers have inevitably fallen. Finally he undertakes to have the singers observe all the marks of expression.

A really capable conductor works in an entirely different way. This leader knows that the members of a chorus must never be allowed to sing with crude or harsh tone, no matter how earnestly they may be striving to learn their parts. Crude vocal production becomes habitual in an incredibly short time. He is always on his guard against it. Further, he knows that the constant appeal to the artistic sense makes it easier for the singers to learn

their parts. So he works always for the finished result. He treats each composition, from the first rehearsal on it, as a work of art, to be approached in an artistic spirit. This is the kind of conducting that gets the best results with a minimum of time and effort.

One advantage the class teacher has over the choral conductor. Practically all choral societies are made up of people who sing in them without pay, just for the love of the work. It devolves on the conductor, therefore, to make the work interesting. Only by that means can he hold the members together. School children on the other hand are obliged to be present at the music period. Yet the teacher's advantage in this regard is perhaps not so great after all. She also has to keep her pupils interested. She has a definite purpose to accomplish in the music lessons, and unless they are interested the purpose cannot be attained.

It might seem a wild flight of fancy to say that during the music period a class is like a little choral society with the teacher as conductor. But for the teacher to imagine this, and to get the class to feel the same spirit, will be a great help to her. And it really does not demand an undue stretch of the

imagination. The routine followed in the class is very much that of the choral society. In all its essential features a music lesson in school is like a rehearsal of a chorus. There is every reason why the teacher should pattern her work after that of the capable conductor. Both aim at exactly the same thing,— to take up compositions, one after the other, and have them sung in an artistic manner.

The Artistic Spirit in Class Instruction. What we have discussed thus far in this chapter is the spirit in which school music is to be taught. Let us now see just how this spirit is manifested in practical instruction. The three elements of study have been reviewed,— appreciation, vocal training, and sight reading. In the case of each element we have seen that the work is best done under the guidance of the artistic sense. How are the three elements combined in instruction, so as to secure a unified impression on the pupils?

The work of the music period consists mainly of the singing of exercises and songs. In the course of their singing the children are taught to read the notes, to sing the melodies artistically and with good tone, and to enter feelingly into the enjoyment of the music. The teacher never loses sight

of the fact that the progress must be continuous along all these lines at once. Needless to say, this does not have to be pointed out to the class. All the children need to know is that they are learning to sing from notes. That, of course, they must do. But when properly conducted, the instruction and practice through which they learn to sing from notes will at the same time bring about the desired advancement in the other two elements of the course. Each song and exercise is so taught as to impress the musical understanding and the vocal organs, as well as to advance the grasp of musical technique.

Atmosphere and Suggestion. Instruction in appreciation and vocal production is a matter of atmosphere and suggestion, rather than of direct teaching. The vocal training calls for nothing more than an occasional phrase sung by the teacher, with now and then a few words of correction. No time whatever is devoted specially to appreciation. That keeps pace with the children's spiritual development, and is brought about by their intimate acquaintance with good music tactfully presented to them. It thus follows that the practical work of the music course is done through the medium of

the sight-reading lessons. The whole effectiveness of school music therefore depends on the compositions chosen for sight-reading study, and on the method and the spirit of instruction in this study.

Efficient Teaching. Here is, in truth, the crucial point of efficient teaching in class music. Any good drill-master can make a fair showing in teaching children to read at sight. But instruction carried on in any such spirit would be harmful rather than beneficial. The voices of the children would almost inevitably become harsh and unmusical, with the constant risk of injury to those with delicately constructed vocal organs. Further, the children would finish the course with the belief that art music is an utterly uninteresting and worthless piece of drudgery. A course that would turn out good sight readers with a dislike for good music would be worse than a failure.

Really efficient teaching is done in an entirely different spirit. It does not treat sight-reading exercises in the manner in which old-fashioned drills in the multiplication table were treated. An entirely different atmosphere is maintained,—an atmosphere of pleasure and interest. This is by no means a difficult matter. Children instinctively

love to sing. All that is needed is to appeal directly to their fondness for singing. In the first music period in the lowest grade the right attitude toward music can be adopted. Let the teacher act as though she also enjoys singing, — as though she and the class are allowed this little diversion in the day's routine. The children will unconsciously fall in with the same spirit, and will enter on the work of the music period with a zest for finding pleasure in it.

Pleasure and Interest. If the atmosphere of pleasure and interest in music is adopted at the start, it will be easily maintained throughout the entire course. There will be no point of abrupt change, at which singing for enjoyment is abandoned and the study of sight reading is taken up as something entirely different. The start in sight reading is made unobtrusively. Beginning it as an occasional interlude in their rote singing, the children do not realize that they are entering on a new phase of music study. Gradually a transition is made to a new form of study, but the spirit in which it is carried on does not change. When a class enters the third grade and begins to devote most of the music period to sight reading, it carries over the already

established attitude toward music. In short, this attitude never changes. In the upper grades it merges insensibly into the true artistic disposition toward music.

The Demands on the Teacher. It need not be thought that the method of teaching here described makes excessive demands on the teacher. Beyond the requirements of the older alphabetical or drill-master method, nothing is demanded of the teacher but a certain point of view. With the right attitude toward music any one competent to teach by the older systems can equally well handle the melodic method. A fair degree of ability to read a line of melody at sight is demanded in either case. Every applicant for a grade teacher's license may reasonably be expected to have this ability. To supplement her facility in sight reading the teacher has the advantage of being able to prepare herself regularly in advance of each day's lesson. Merely to run over the lesson so as to impress it freshly on the memory will help in many a difficult place.

Granted the knowledge of musical technique demanded in sight-reading instruction by any method, the only other requirement for the most advanced form of teaching is the right mental attitude on the

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part of the teacher. Instruction by the melodic method is not in any way a complex or laborious process. Neither teacher nor class is ever called on to do anything difficult.

The Plan of Instruction. The course progresses by easy steps. One lesson follows another with no appreciable increase in complexity. If the course is properly graded, the advance in technical difficulty from one day's work to the next can hardly be noticed. Each lesson consists of a few exercises to be sung by the class. An exercise is sung three or four times, a slight improvement showing with each repetition. In the lower grades the teacher first sings the passage and sets a model for the class. One hearing of the melody takes off the rough edge of newness, without allowing it to impress the memory too deeply. The children pattern their singing on the tones sung for them as a model. As they sing, the teacher helps and prompts them just as a conductor does with his chorus. She listens closely to the tone quality, and is ready with a correction for any marked fault. She beats the time for the phrases with hand, pencil, or pointer, holding the class together as a conductor would. Nothing more than this is necessary.

Expression and Feeling. As a class advances from grade to grade, the teacher is called on to sing less and less frequently. The habit of pleasing vocal expression is established in the lower grades. Once it is established, it is necessary only to be on guard lest a class insensibly fall into an unmusical manner of singing. So also with the matter of expression. All we need to seek is a pleasing musical delivery of the phrases, which fully brings out their melodic content.

For the purposes of class singing, expression means simply that type of singing which gives full value to the beauty of melody. This is not attained merely by following the so-called marks of expression,—soft, loud, slow, fast. It is easily possible to follow all these marks, and yet to sing in a hard, wooden manner, utterly devoid of beauty. The kind of expression we want is a graceful, melodious singing of the phrases. This is a matter of feeling for the beauty of melody, not of following printed directions.

With the growth of musical intelligence from grade to grade, a class advances steadily in its feeling for melody. All the teacher need do to bring this about is to make her own occasional singing graceful and

melodious. The effect is reached through the appeal to the child's musical sense, which is quickened by the constant hearing of a good model. As the musical sense ripens from grade to grade, the demands on the teacher's own singing for the purpose of expression become steadily less. But just as with vocal tone production, constant attention to the class singing continues always to be necessary.

Explanations of knotty points in the upper grades are so interspersed with the class singing that they do not break the continuity of the work just outlined. Whatever is sung is performed expressively and with good taste.

Artistic Singing. In each lesson a number of exercises are sung, each one being repeated several times. At the first attempt a new exercise is sung with some hesitation, even with the teacher's model to guide the class. The pupils' minds are intent on learning the notes. With each repetition it goes more easily, and they get a better grasp of its melodic character. As their acquaintance with the passage under study advances, they respond more readily to the suggestions for good tone and graceful delivery. But the teacher never loses sight of the artistic features of their singing. Her

own mental attitude acts always as a powerful suggestion to the pupils, keeping them constantly imbued with the right mental spirit.

The Music Supervisor. With the advance in school music during recent years the duties of the music supervisor have become steadily more exacting. It used to be enough for him to be able to play the piano and to conduct an old-fashioned sight-reading drill. At present it is expected of the supervisor that he be able to sing acceptably, and to train voices as well. He must be a competent choral conductor, with an extremely wide acquaintance in compositions of every kind suited for class use. We remarked in an earlier chapter that the supervisor should have entire oversight of all the music in the schools or the classes under his direction. It is of the utmost importance for him to lay out the precise method to be followed by every grade teacher. Conferences should be called at frequent intervals, in order that he may instruct his teachers in all the details of their music work. The supervisor's visits to the class-rooms give him the opportunity to conduct model lessons, for the guidance of the teachers even more than for the instruction of the classes.

All the work of the music course should be clearly laid out for the teachers, — a duty which devolves naturally upon the supervisor. In the choice of compositions to be studied this is an extremely important duty. A well-graded course of exercises and songs is the first requisite for effective teaching. The alert supervisor is not bound to the blind following of a set of text-books. From the compositions given in the books he can make his own selections, instructing the teachers to pass over all that do not satisfy his judgment. Especially in the directions for teaching contained in all the music text-books, the supervisor is called on to exercise his own discretion. It often happens that a book gives exactly the songs and exercises needed for a class, while the directions for teaching them run counter to the supervisor's ideas. Here his procedure is simple enough. He coaches the teachers in the compositions, and explains how he wishes to have them taught.

A supervisor may be obliged to use text-books containing both melodious song passages and tuneless *sol-fa* drills. His wisest plan then is to ignore the tuneless drills, and to have all the sight-reading work done on the songs and melodious exercises.

Any good set of texts will provide him with enough melodious passages for the purpose, so graded that he need use them only in the order given.

For a supervisor to devote all his time to class visiting would not be the most effective procedure. He has important work to do in the conferences with his teachers. Much time is demanded also for the laying out of the work. Any supervisor unwilling to follow slavishly a set of texts will be well aware of this fact. Further, the selection of music for marches and assembly work is important enough to deserve all the time it takes to do it conscientiously. In his class visiting the supervisor may arrange to be present at the lessons in which explanations are given. As a trained musician he will naturally have a better grasp of technical points than can be expected of the teacher.

As the head of a school's musical activities, the supervisor is in position to exercise an important influence in many directions. By his general bearing he can uphold the dignity of music as a beautiful and noble art. Many people have not yet freed themselves from an old-fashioned notion that music does not deserve to be respected by serious people. Especially in small communities is this

prejudice likely to be met. One can best oppose it by combining the right conception of music with an orderly and well-rounded life. There is no place in the school for the type of narrow-minded musician devoid of interest in anything outside his own art. The supervisor should not lose touch with the manifold activities of the world.

Within the school the supervisor's example of a healthy attitude toward life, combined with a frank love for music, is extremely important. For children to get an idea that there is something "freakish" about the musician would be disastrous. Nor should they be allowed to feel any self-conscious timidity about giving expression to their fondness for music. The Anglo-Saxon temperament is peculiar in this regard; it has a shamefaced way of trying to hide every evidence of emotional stirring. That has long worked to the detriment of music in both England and America. The feeling can often be detected in school children, and it is by no means unknown among the teachers. Any eccentricity of appearance or manner on the part of the supervisor would tend to heighten the feeling. An inert unresponsiveness to music, due solely to our Anglo-Saxon habit of inhibiting our emotions

in public, is often seen in a class. The supervisor is called on to overcome this feeling. Here his own example before the class is a factor of great importance. With a little personal magnetism and a frank, sincere display of his own fondness for the music being studied, he can "bring the children out of their shells" and induce them to give free vent to their musical enthusiasm.

A pleasing voice, well produced, is a great asset to the supervisor. In the class he meets the children at close range. It is a valuable lesson for them to see that one whom they know and like can throw himself into the feeling rendition of a few melodious phrases, without making himself in any way ridiculous. A subconscious fear of being absurd often prevents children, especially when grouped in a class, from singing naturally and spontaneously. Let the supervisor show by his own example that the fear of being absurd is itself ridiculous. In every class visit it is wise for him to sing a few of the exercises in the most finished and artistic manner. In addition to serving as a model of good singing this will also work to counteract the common tendency toward emotional repression. Its value moreover as an example to the teacher is not to be overlooked.

CHAPTER XII

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON SCHOOL MUSIC

The Ambitious Teacher. Within the past ten or fifteen years the demands made on the grade teacher in the music course have been increased remarkably. This is seen most concretely in the matter of sight reading. Nowadays the teacher cannot do her work properly unless she is a capable sight reader. Considerable hardship is thus imposed on the teacher whose own education was finished before school music had reached its present point. Not having had a sufficient grounding in her elementary school years, probably she never has had the opportunity to make up this deficiency. Yet the teacher is held to her task, and she is called on to show results in music as in all the other studies.

A teacher who earnestly wishes to make up a deficiency in sight reading has several ways open to her. Of these the simplest is to take a course of lessons in the subject. Private lessons are no doubt the most effective, but the question of ex-

pense has to be considered here. Where several teachers in the same or neighboring schools can club together and take their lessons in a little class, the expense may be greatly reduced. Class work is almost as effective and in many ways even more interesting than individual lessons. Correspondence courses offer another satisfactory plan. There are a number of reputable music schools which give lessons in sight reading by mail at moderate cost. Even without any instruction, a teacher possessed of enough determination may accomplish a great deal through self-study. In the text-books used in her school she has all the material needed. A sincere music supervisor is always glad to help those of his teachers who wish to improve their sight reading.

A winter or two of attendance at a choral society is a great help to the teacher. Almost every live church has a society of the kind, in which all desirable applicants are welcomed. Little private singing circles exist everywhere. A conductor of such a society usually finds himself obliged to include a few minutes of sight-reading work in every rehearsal. The whole atmosphere of a choral society conduces to a knowledge and understanding of music, both

technical and artistic. Every society of the kind is usually a nucleus of musical activity, and of the social life in which music is a genuine interest. There are sure to be a number of members who sing or play acceptably. The rehearsals are apt to be more like social gatherings, with music as the main topic of conversation, than formal meetings for study. Any teacher who wishes to broaden her knowledge of the art will find this an extremely interesting and enjoyable means. Her class work is bound to show an improvement in consequence.

Another excellent way of improving one's grasp of music is found in the judicious use of the phonograph. Every home has a phonograph nowadays. It is just as easy to play records of good music as of trash. Attention and discrimination in listening to the records make them a most valuable means of musical culture. The best foundation for a good taste was seen to be an intimate acquaintance with a large number of masterpieces.

In the records of the great singers and players we have the choice of an enormous range of fine compositions, all performed with the best artistic finish. Good records should be played repeatedly, until the listener knows them absolutely by heart.

The habit should be formed of listening with the closest attention. Memorizing the melodies does not by any means sum up the educative value of the phonograph. Almost as important is the training of the ear to hear and to recognize tone qualities. Each of the great singers whose voices are recorded for us has certain individualities of tone, which reveal themselves gradually to the attentive listener. The more the ear is exercised in this way, the keener it becomes, and the greater is the pleasure it receives from the enjoyment of beautiful tone.

Every opportunity for hearing the actual performance of good music should also be eagerly embraced. Every city, small as well as large, presents frequent opportunities of the kind. The recitals of visiting artists, both vocal and instrumental, are always worth attending for their educational features, as well as for the pure pleasure they afford.

Merely to be a cultured and appreciative listener one must have an insight into a mass of things, which can be acquired only through the experience of hearing music repeatedly. Explanations and descriptions can never really tell us what is meant by such words as sonata, movement, motif, aria,

symphony, fugue, prelude, and the like. Only when we come to know them through hearing repeated examples of each one do their names really mean anything definite. To carry on her class work effectively the teacher needs the foundation in the art of music to which knowledge of this kind is practically essential.

The Phonograph in the School. The value of the phonograph in advancing the school's musical life is coming to be generally recognized. Every school ought to have a good one, large enough to sound well in the main assembly room or auditorium. An excellent plan is to have regular weekly or bi-weekly phonograph lecture-concerts, attended by the pupils and teachers of the entire school, or at any rate by those in the upper grades.

A programme for each concert may be arranged to last for twenty or thirty minutes. Naturally the supervisor has the direction of the concert, and is assisted in handling the machine by a teacher or intelligent pupil. The playing of each record is prefaced by a few words of description, giving the nature of the composition, the names of composer and performer, and an interesting account of the action it portrays or the sentiment it embodies.

Each programme might contain at least one number previously played, the supervisor varying his remarks with every repetition. Let the children understand that they do not exhaust the interest of a fine piece of music by hearing it repeated several times. Lovers of good music enjoy hearing the same works over and over again, year after year. Children must not be encouraged in a demand for a constant succession of novelties at their school concerts. A limited number of the best records, tastefully grouped in the programmes, and adequately presented, is ample for a school's purpose.

The Special Chorus. In every school there are sure to be a number of children with really excellent voices. A picked chorus of gifted pupils can usually be selected, which, by a little extra instruction outside the regular school hours, can be trained to produce excellent results. This work also devolves naturally on the supervisor. In schools containing both boys and girls a mixed chorus is to be preferred. Enough tenors and baritones will be found in the higher grades to round out a fine body of choral tone. A four-part chorus of either male or female voices, as the case may be, will be available in the segregated schools.

A picked chorus of the kind can be made a highly attractive feature of the school's musical life. Everybody loves the melting harmonies of a well-balanced choir. Through the occasional performances of the special chorus at the opening exercises, an entire school may be introduced to the beauties of harmony. At public exhibitions, commencement, and other occasions, the selected choir may be made to reflect great credit on the school as a whole.

A school might easily learn to take pride in its picked chorus, just as it does in its baseball team and its track athletes. Interschool contests in choral singing would surely serve just as good an educational purpose as ball games and athletic meets. This is moreover a line of activity in which girls as well as boys can take part. By joint meetings of this kind, a stimulus would be given to the school music of an entire city. The ambition to be some day selected for the choir will give a zest to the music studies of the children in all the grades.

Solo Singing. Solo singing by specially gifted pupils might also be made an extremely interesting feature of school music. There is unfortunately no

time for individual instruction in the regular music periods. But in every school there is usually something going on after hours in the way of training children in recitations, and other preparation for assembly exercises. A song is just as easy to teach as a recitation, and its effect is often greater. Even the music supervisors would be well repaid for the time they would expend in such extra instruction. A few well-rendered solos at public exercises will add materially to the estimation in which a school's music is held. For both school and public exercises solo singing deserves to be widely cultivated.

Tests. Tests and examinations in class music present a peculiar difficulty. Sight reading is very much easier to test than appreciation, vocal management, or musicianship. It thus comes about that the progress of a class is apt to be rated solely according to the ability it displays in sight reading. A natural consequence is that supervisors and teachers are tempted to devote most of their attention to this topic, and to neglect the other elements of the course. This is greatly to be regretted. It would almost be better to dispense with tests entirely than thus to undo the good work of the course.

There is, however, no difficulty in conducting tests so as to determine the progress of a class along all the lines covered by instruction in music. A sufficient measure of musicianship may be assumed on the part of the examiner. Yet even here the demands to be met are by no means exacting. The technical knowledge involved in reading a line of melody, combined with a cultured taste and a little experience, will suffice to enable an educator to judge choral singing on its merits. In addition to sight reading, the points to be observed are tone quality, precision of rhythm, feeling for melody and expression, and *ensemble* work. It is difficult to grade these points with precision. Yet experience will soon show an examiner what level of attainment should be reached in each grade. No direct test of appreciation is needed, as that is involved in the musicianly aspects of class singing.

A formal test might then be arranged as follows: Hear the class sing a number which they have learned thoroughly, and judge their tone production and general musicianship on that. Next place in their hands a composition new to the children, and allow them to run over it silently for two

or three minutes. Have them sing it then, two, or perhaps three times, giving them the benefit of such time beats and other helps as a choral conductor ordinarily would give.

On the basis of this singing judge their ability in sight reading, and also amplify the previous judgment of their tone production and musicianship. A test of this kind would hardly require more than fifteen minutes. Written tests in notation will also be of value in the sixth and seventh grades. Assembly singing might well be observed now and then by a competent official. In this way the general musical atmosphere of a school can quickly be estimated.

Indirect Benefits of the Music Course. Our review of the principles and methods of school music would not be complete without the mention of a few incidental results of a well-conducted course. These might be called by-products of instruction in class music. They are secondary results of a beneficial kind, secured through the proper teaching of music. While not directly aimed at, they are, none the less, inevitable. A clear understanding of these features may help to heighten the indirect

influence of the course, without any extra attention being devoted to them in actual instruction.

Correct Speech Habits. Correct and refined speech habits are everywhere recognized as a distinguishing mark of well-bred people. Refinement always shows itself both in a grammatical use of language and in a clear and careful enunciation. Purely as an evidence of culture, refinement of manner is well worthy of being cultivated in school children. But there is something of more direct bearing on the education of good citizens involved here than mere outward niceness of manner. There is a close connection between the inner nature revealed by good manners, and the type of character which normally inclines to good conduct. The culture of nice speech habits has a direct influence on that development of the emotional nature which was seen in our first chapter to be an essential element of a well-rounded education. Niceness of speech is therefore a matter of great importance to the educator.

Refined and correct speech is directly fostered in children by a well-conducted course in school music. The habits of enunciation acquired in singing are always carried over into ordinary speech. The two are, in fact, identical, both in the muscular actions

involved and in the nerve centres by which the movements are controlled. It is, moreover, not alone the special drilling in enunciation which affects the habits of speech. Slovenly and incorrect speech is in great measure due simply to a bluntness of the sense of hearing, combined with a lack of attention on the part of the individual to the sounds of his own voice. Music study develops the ear's fineness of discrimination, and, at the same time, it implants the habit of attentive listening. Each of these operations is an aid to the advancement of correct speech.

Sensory-motor Training. The training of the sense of hearing is itself an educational factor of no mean value. Our whole theory of education hinges on the doctrine of the sensory-motor arc. According to this doctrine the best impression is made on the central nervous system when a sensation is followed by its appropriate motor response. The doctrine finds its most adequate expression in the systems of manual training. So far as concerns the factors which contribute to the training of the central nervous system, and through that of the mind, manual training and music are in many respects alike. Both involve the special training of one

sense, and the performance of complex muscular operations calling for a high degree of skill.

In both the training for sensory discrimination and the perfecting of skill habits, the exercise afforded in school music is remarkably effective. It is a well-known fact that the minute degrees of difference in muscular adjustment involved in singing in tune are among the finest of which we are capable. So also with the accurate hearing of intonations, tone qualities, and differences of force in sound,—there seems to be almost no limit to the degree of refinement which the ear may attain. Manual training depends for its effectiveness on the cultivation of accuracy in sensory discriminations and muscular responses. Accuracy in both these directions is especially fostered by well-conducted class singing. In addition to its main purpose, school music may therefore claim to accomplish much also that is demanded from manual training.

Correct Breathing. The benefits derived through the acquiring of correct habits of breathing need be no more than mentioned. Even though no attention is paid to special exercises in breathing in the class music periods, the habit of filling and emptying the lungs completely at each breath is inevitably

acquired by the class. In the form of correct breath control unconsciously adopted through the natural method of singing, the muscles of inspiration and expiration receive all the exercise needed for their full development.¹ A normal development of the lung capacity is thus secured in a peculiarly healthful and stimulating manner. The habit of correct posture and graceful carriage is also imparted in the same indirect but effective way. School music is thus seen to be a valuable form of physical training.

¹ See the author's *The Psychology of Singing*, Part 2, Chapter II.

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